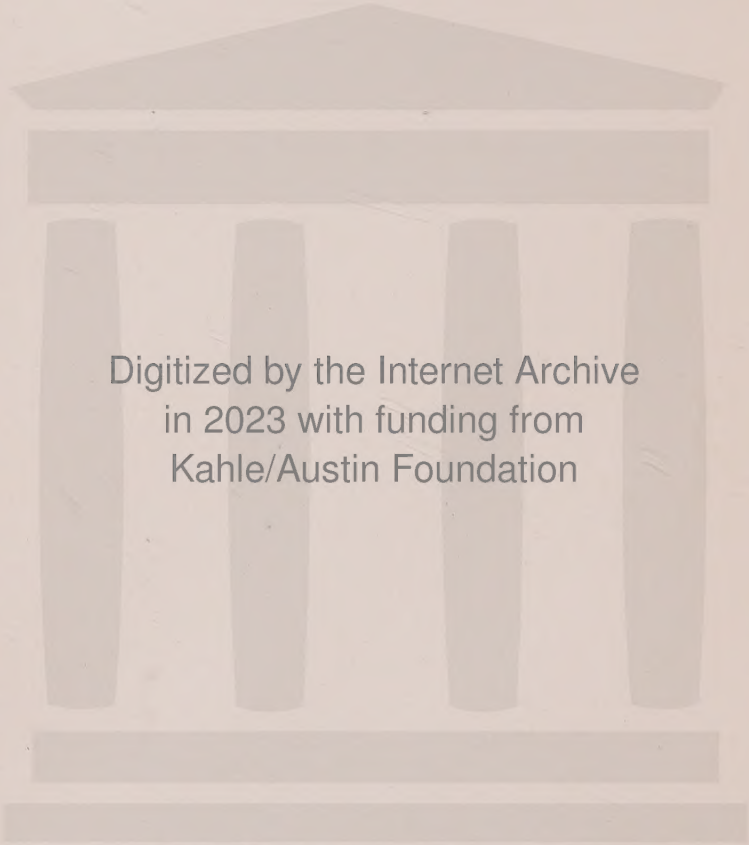
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Volume IV

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Vol. I

Publications of the Westchester County Historical Society
Volume IV

The McDonald Papers

PART I

Edited by
William S. Hadaway

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INTRODUCTION

The "McDonald Papers" were prepared by John M. McDonald, a native of Westchester County, and read before the New York Historical Society as follows [1]:

The Life, Character, etc., of the Marquis de la Rouerie (Col. Armand),	May 6, 1851
The Westchester Guides in the War of the Revolution,	May 4, 1852
The Neutral Ground,	May 2, 1854
Battle of White Plains, etc.,	Oct. 7, 1856
The Danbury Expedition, April 23d to 28th, 1777	Oct. 5, 1858
The Capture of Pound Ridge,	Oct. 1, 1861
Colonel DeLancey's Final Departure,	June 17, 1862
The Operations and Skirmishes of the British and American Armies in 1776, Before the Battle of White Plains,	Oct. 7, 1862

The "McDonald Papers" are not only interesting and valuable for the information that they contain but they are

[1] It was not then customary for an author to present his own papers before the New York Historical Society and these papers were read by George H. Moore, an officer of the Society. Mr. Moore re-read "The Westchester Guides in the War of the Revolution" on Nov. 3, 1863, and "The Life, Character, etc., of the Marquis de la Rouerie (Col. Armand)" on March 2, 1869 and again on June 7, 1881.

"The Westchester Guides in the War of the Revolution" was again read before the same Society by Edward Floyd de Lancey on May 4, 1897, and "The Neutral Ground" was read a second time by Dr. Sydney H. Carney, Jr., on Feb. 7, 1899.

Edward Floyd de Lancey will be remembered as an incorporator and the first active president of this Society, 1874–1876, and as one deeply interested in Westchester County history. Among many other items he was the author of "The Origin and History of Manors in New York, and in the County of Westchester" and "Mamaroneck" both published in Scharf's "History of Westchester County," Philadelphia, 1886.

also unique in that the author was able to develope a considerable amount of his source material. The latter comprises a series of 407 interviews with 241 different persons, between 70 and 96 years of age, in the years 1844 to 1850. These interviews cover 1,100 pages of manuscript and are now included in the Hufeland Westchesteriana.[1]

Mr. Hufeland has mounted these manuscripts in eight (8) specially prepared volumes; the index shows 3,245 references to 1,383 subjects and to 68 localities. In view of the erection of a marker at the grave of Cornelius Oakley, the Westchester Guide, by this Society this fall, and to show the quality of this source material, the following abbreviated selections have been made:

Interview with Sarah Oakley, Dec. 12, 1845

Cornelius Oakley, my father, died at White Plains on the 15th of January, 1805, being at the time of his death 48 years and 14 days old. He was interred in the burying-ground belonging to the Purchase Meeting Society where his father, mother and friends also lie. I do not know that his grave can be found but I hope and believe on proper enquiry and search that it may and this circumstance may lead to the discovery, viz:—his daughter Eliza was buried at his feet in a contrary direction, that is, at right angles. His father was by religious profession a Quaker, and very averse to his taking up arms in the Revolutionary War. His father, from the old deeds in the family, appears to have removed from Westchester and settled at White Plains in 1755. James Oakley, the guide, etc., was my father's cousin and Isaac Oakley was his brother. My father was once taken prisoner and confined in the Old Sugar House along with his brother and others and determined to make his escape. His brother opposed the attempt, but he was resolved and persuaded his friends to let him down from the windows by a rope about midday. He took the road to Haerlem with all expedition

[1] This important collection of Westchester County items has been made by Otto Hufeland of Mt. Vernon, N. Y., during the past fifty (50) years. It is without question one of the most complete assemblages of local materials in this country and is especially rich in manuscripts, maps, prints, engravings, pamphlets, etc. It is a monument of patient, persistent and discriminating research.

and when he arrived went to Mrs. Day's Tavern and threw himself upon her mercy and friendship, telling her that his life and liberty were in her power. The woman was much alarmed and trembled with agitation but said she would do all in her power to aid him. Mrs. Day is an old acquaintance and tried to get a boat to take him across the Haerlem River but could not succeed. He then asked for a rope and a bottle of brandy. She had no rope, but he persuaded her to cut the cording of one of her beds and give it to him. She also supplied him with a bottle of brandy. With the cord and some rails he made a raft and with much difficulty got across when his knowledge of the country enabled him soon to join his friends.

From Caleb Tompkins' Paper

Some time in the year 1781 or 2 Isaac Oakley (brother of Cornelius Oakley) was taken prisoner. The night after he was taken Cornelius Oakley and Abraham Dyckman (both guides to the American Army when any of them was stationed in Westchester County to aid the militia in defending the lower part of the county) a lieutenant's command of twenty-two men were stationed near them. Oakley and Dyckman prevailed upon the lieutenant to accompany them to Westchester and try and retake Isaac Oakley before he was taken to New York.

They started and after proceeding four or five miles night overtook them and was likely to be very dark and rainy. The lieutenant hesitated about proceeding farther as he had no orders and if anything disastrous should happen he might be censured, but concluded to leave it to Oakley and Dyckmen. They consulted together and agreed to proceed. When within two or three miles of Delancey's outpost they took an inhabitant who was in the habit of frequenting daily the outpost and trading with the enemy and who knew the countersign or watchword, when hailed by a sentinel. This man informed them that there was a refugee in bed upstairs who would answer their purpose better than himself Oakley went upstairs, ordered him up and informed him what they wanted; he said if he was found out they would hang him. Oakley gave him his word of honor that it should not be made known as long as the war lasted. They learned from the refugee that the outpost had but one sentinel, it being dark and stormy that they were not apprehensive of an attack.

When within one hundred yards of the house they halted and informed the soldiers what was to be done. They told

the refugee if he was faithful, as soon as they effected their purpose he might go, but if he had deceived them they would kill him on the spot. They then placed the refugee in front of two soldiers, one behind the other and Oakley behind them that they might appear as one man and ordered the refugee when hailed to answer but press forward and seize the sentry, which they did with his gun on his shoulder. The party then marched in front of the house and close to it when Oakley and Dyckman went on to the piazza to get a peep into the room through the window shutters (which were old). Oakley discovered four men sitting around a table in the middle of the room playing cards. Wishing to get a view of the situation of the men and where their arms were placed he put his fingers between the shutters and pulled them a little open; they made a creaking noise which startled the men. Oakley thinking there was no time to be lost dashed open the shutters and jumped headforemost against the window taking the sash with him and fell full length on the floor threatening at the time if they made any noise he would kill them on the spot.

Before Oakley could get on his feet, Dyckman sprang in over him at the same time the soldiers burst in the door and they took 24 prisoners and one of them was a cornet in Delancey's Horse; their surprise was so sudden, that but three or four of the enemy had time to seize their muskets. Oakley hurried off the prisoners and had gone three miles, when the alarm gun of the enemy was fired. They hurried on the prisoners and reached the American lines in safety.

Oakley's Escape from the Refugees at Mamaroneck

Cornelius Oakley had been down as a guide to a lieutenant's party, when returning through Rye and Mamaroneck he saw Benjamin Griffin standing at the door of a house on Rye Neck about 12 or 15 yards from the road. When Griffin saw Oakley he drew back and disappeared. Oakley rode into a gate near the road and enquired if they did see Benjamin Griffin there; they said no. He insisted that he had seen him at the door and told them to tell him to come out, that he should not hurt him. He then came to the door and Oakley asked him for something to eat. Griffin gave him some cake and a mug of cider while sitting on his horse. Griffin expected they would be pursued and kept looking out for the enemy; he soon saw they were in sight and told Oakley of it. He paid but little attention to it although he was there alone, the rest of the party having gone on. He

sat still while he drank the cider and ate the cake. He then handed Griffin the mug, drew up the reins, drew his sword, put spurs to his horse and rode out of the gate when the enemy were within twenty yards of him and made his escape in safety.

Interview with Samuel Oakley, Oct. 12, 1844

My grandfather and the father of Cornelius Oakley were brothers. James Oakley was my uncle. One of Delancey's men was up with a flag and talking of some prisoners they had recently made said to Cornelius Oakley—"We'll have you next." Oakley replied, "That may well be for none of us can tell what may happen." He soon afterward received word from a spy that there was to be a great ball at a house near Fort No. 8. Oakley and a party went down on the appointed night. They passed the advanced posts undiscovered and crept along a wall by Redoubt No. 8, close to the sentinels and reached the house in question without being seen or heard. The revellers were completely surprised being engaged in dancing while they surrounded the house and up to the moment they entered. The men were seized before they could get their arms and threatened with death if they resisted. The women shrieked and a scene ensued when their partners were captured, but they brought off most if not all the prisoners. The garrison of No. 8 was alarmed and pursued; but Oakley's party retreated successfully having taken among the prisoners the very man who predicted Oakley's capture.

Interview with Sarah Oakley, Dec. 19, 1845

When the French army left Westchester (in 1781 probably) Rochambeau and the officers of Rochambeau's staff proposed to give my father a certificate to show their sense of the skill and fidelity with which he had served them in the capacity of guide. My father at first declined the offer, but they persuaded him to accept, saying "If it does you no good, it can do you no harm and you had best take it."

After my father's escape from imprisonment at New York, General Washington invited him to dinner where he met a large board of officers, convened, as he soon after discovered for the purpose of persuading him to become a *spy*. The proposition was made as soon as the cloth was removed and rejected instantly with indignation. Washington and his officers then tried to appease him and to accomplish their

designs by encomiums upon his abilities and by flattering appeals to his patriotism. They urged the need the public stood in at that moment of a confidential agent to reside with the enemy, they stated the exalted opinion they entertained of his fidelity and address, they declared that they, considered him the very man who would make the sacrifice required to serve his country, and that he might designate his own terms and name any sum for compensation. He replied that he was willing to do anything for his country that is just and right, but would not forfeit his good name by acting in the dishonorable capacity of a spy; that he was willing to sacrifice anything for his country but his honor. Upon their urging him again to comply with their proposition, he rose from the table, expressed how much his feelings were hurt to think they had not a better opinion of him and took his leave. The proposal disgusted him so much that he left the service for a while and kept a school on Long Island. The bold stand he always took on all questions involving principle created for him warm friends and enemies.

Interview with Calvin Mead, Nov. 19, 1846

I belonged to Captain Honeywell's volunteer horse and Cornelius Oakley, a small, light but very brave man was with us often.

Interview with Hannah Miller of White Plains, October 3, 1846

Cornelius Oakley was concealed by Widow Day several days. Couldn't swim and crossed Harlem River on a raft. While laboring hard to get across, a "Shite poke"[1] alighted and sat on the raft. He said—"If ever a man was in distress and prayed, I did then."

Interview with Miss Sarah Oakley at Mr. Nathaniel Valentine's at Tuckahoe, October 20, 1850

I don't know whether the guides had commissions; there is none among my father's papers. It was at General Washington's Headquarters that my father dined when they urged him to go below as a spy. About a year ago (in 1850) we went to the Quaker burying ground in Purchase Street where we identified the grave of our father. After we had discov-

[1] A small green heron.

ered and fixed upon it, Mr. James Carpenter who lives near by, and was present at the interment, joined us, and his recollection of the spot corresponded with ours exactly, so that in all probability we have ascertained the right grave. We then had a plain stone prepared and put up, such as the Quakers allow. It contains simply the name of Cornelius Oakley, the time of his death and his age and nothing more.

My father frequently visited his relatives in company with the young French officers about Rochambeau whose names he and my mother used to mention (Lameth, Berthier, Dumas, etc.,). I don't know when he was taken prisoner or how long he remained a prisoner in New York. It was, I believe, in the Sugar House in Liberty Street where he was confined. In jail he went by the name of the *Quaker* probably because his father belonged to the Friends. He had many friends in New York who furnished him with provisions. These were always left for *The Quaker*. He made the jailor his friend and was furnished with citizens clothes by his city friends.

Immediately on receiving them you shall be furnished with copies of my father's papers for which my brothers have sent to Washington. My father married soon after the war, but in what particular year I don't know. My mother's maiden name was Sarah Warner. She was the daughter of John Warner who owned the most southerly farm of Philipse Manor.

Interview with Andrew Corsa of Fordham, October 7, 1848

Soon after the French and American armies came down to reconnoitre (New York) Cornelius Oakley and Isaac Webbers came for me on a Sunday morning and asked me to accompany them as a guide to Morrisania and I went. We found Generals Washington and Rochambeau waiting for us—(From here on the account is substantially the same as given in Bolton's "History of the County of Westchester," New York, 1881, Vol. 2, pp. 532–534 incl.)

Interview with William Barker of Eastchester, Oct. 20 and 23, 1850

Elijah Vincent a blacksmith of Eastchester after the war had a quarrel with Cornelius Oakley at White Plains and offered combat on the spot. "I'll fight you with any weapon you may make choice of, from a six-pounder to a pop-gun, and from a dragoon's sword to a cambric needle."

In addition to the "Papers" and interviews McDonald left a number of note-books which are among the manuscripts in the library of the New York Historical Society. These exhibit wide reading and research and show that the author was a sincere and thorough student.

In observance of the sesqui-centennial of many of the events described, the papers are chronologically arranged rather than in the order of their preparation. The size of the volume is determined by the amount of the appropriation; the arrangement is such that the parts may be bound together as one volume when publication is completed.

Acknowledgment is given William A. Moore,[1] President of the Board of Education, New Rochelle, who courteously loaned the photostatic copies of the papers for use in preparing this volume. Also to the New York Historical Society and its librarian, Alexander J. Wall, for preparing the photostats. To Otto Hufeland greatful appreciation is rendered for coöperation, for helpful suggestions and for placing at my disposal the contents of his library.

William S. Hadaway,
Editor.

New Rochelle, N. Y.,
September, 1926.

[1] See the Quarterly Bulletin of the Westchester County Historical Society, Vol II, No. 2, April, 1926, p. 16.

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CHAPTER I

THE OPERATIONS AND SKIRMISHES OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN ARMIES IN 1776, BEFORE THE BATTLE OF WHITEPLAINS.

The position which General Washington took with the main body of his army, in September, 1776, after the evacuation of New York, was upon the rocky and elevated grounds which are usually called Harlem Heights, and are situated in the northern part of Manhattan or New York Island. The island is here about a mile in width and is separated on the east and north, from its nearest mainland, the County of Westchester, by Harlem river and Spyt den duivel Creek; the one, a strait issuing from the East River or Long Island Sound, and the other a narrow inlet from the Hudson. The chain of rugged heights which borrow their name from Harlem, extends above the place where this ancient village stood; stretching from south to north for several miles, along the upper part of Manhattan. Fort Washington had already been erected upon the most commanding of these eminences. It overlooked the Hudson, being about two miles and a half south of Kingsbridge and Dyckmansbridge, both of which crossed the Spyt den duivel Creek, and formed, at that time, the only passes from Manhattan Island to the mainland. Fort Independence, at the same time in rapid process of construction, stood upon elevated ground on the main, about a mile northeast of Kingsbridge, between the highway leading to Boston and the Milesquare road.

About a mile and a half south of Fort Washington, two intrenched lines, nearly parallel with each other, and extending across the island from Harlem River to the Hudson,

were formed by the American commander-in-chief. These lines were about a quarter of a mile apart. They faced the enemy's camp, to the south, and were defended by batteries and advanced works. The outer line toward New York, occupied a succession of eminences, until it reached the Hudson. It intersected the post-road leading to Kingsbridge, at the spot where this highway, after ascending from Harlem plain, passes over the brow of the height called Breakneck Hill. The inner line was stronger than the other, both from the nature of the ground it traversed, and from the greater progress made toward its completion.

In a few days these intrenchments attained sufficient strength to resist a vigorous attack. They defended the American position in front, toward the south. Toward the north, the camp was covered by Fort Washington, with its outworks and batteries, and by Fort Independence; while on their flanks, the Americans were protected by Harlem River and the Hudson.

Washington's headquarters were about a quarter of a mile north of the inner line, at a country-seat then belonging to Colonel Roger Morris, and now known as the "Jumel House."

The British army at this time lay in an encampment which stretched across the island, with its right resting upon the East River near Horen's Hook, and its left extending to the Hudson, a little south of Macgowan's Pass, being protected by vessels of war upon either flank. Harlem Plains extended between the hostile camps.

Before the end of September, Washington's fortifications had become so formidable, that the Commander-in-chief of the Royal army would not run the hazard of attempting their reduction by assault. Thenceforward, the thoughts of the latter were bent upon getting in the rear of his adversary by an invasion of Westchester. The supplies of the American camp came principally from the counties along the Hudson and from New England, and General Howe thought with reason, that Washington, when his communications with the country toward the north and east should once be cut off, would either be compelled to surrender at discretion, or to

fight under all disadvantages. The policy of the two generals was exactly antagonistic. Howe was at the head of a regular army, which was not only in the highest state of discipline and equipment; but flushed with the victory of Long Island; he was therefore desirous of terminating the war by a pitched battle in the open field. Washington's forces were for the most part patriotic, but untrained militiamen or volunteers, capable of fighting well under cover, but unskilled in military evolutions and disheartened from recent defeat. He was determined therefore to act upon the defensive, and to avoid a general action, unless he should be well intrenched upon strong ground. He hoped moreover before the occurrence of a general action, to animate his men and accustom them to danger, by allowing them to engage in small enterprises and skirmishes to which they were naturally much inclined.

General Howe was now anxiously desirous to possess himself of the Hudson, as far up as the highlands. The command of the river above York Island, at all times desirable for military operations in that quarter, was at this moment rendered peculiarly important to the British general, from the well known fact that the supplies of the Continental army, were to a great extent received, by way of the North River; and from his knowledge that the inhabitants of Dutchess and Westchester were, for the most part, in the royal interest, and from recent and certain information, that they "were actually meditating an insurrection for the purpose of seizing the posts in the Highlands." Washington was well aware of their designs, and in order to prevent or defeat any such attempt, several corps of militia from New Hampshire and Connecticut, were, a few days subsequently ordered to Fishkill and Courtland's Manor.

The British commander now employed his men in throwing up a chain of redoubts, to extend across Macgowan's Hill, from the north to the East River. The object of these labors, was to cover the city of New York, and render it capable of a vigorous defense, while the main body of the army should be engaged in remote operations.

The most anxious and frequent question which one Amer-

ican whig now put to another, was "Where will the British make their next attempt?" Here Washington's general officers were divided in opinion. Some of them supposed that General Howe's most earnest wish was to make himself the immediate master of the whole of New York Island, and that therefore he would at once attempt the subjugation of Fort Washington and its dependencies, by a direct attack. The others attributed to him more military skill. They maintained that he would land in Westchester, and establish himself in the American rear, for the purpose of compelling Washington either to hazard a general action, or to abandon his fortifications. In a council of war held at this time, it was determined to guard against both these contingencies. Ten thousand men under the Commander-in-chief, were to be retained on the island, for the defense of Fort Washington, and the redoubts and lines in that vicinity; while the shores of Morrisania and Westchester Town, were to be protected by General Heath, also at the head of ten thousand men. A floating bridge was to be thrown across Harlem River in order that the two corps of the army might be enabled to communicate with, and support each other. Major-general Greene, on the Jersey side of the Hudson, was to command a flying camp, five thousand strong. These determinations were carried into effect immediately.

On the 3d of October, General Heath who was apprehensive that the British might land on Throg's Neck, reconnoitred his position in that direction, accompanied by Colonel Hand of the Pennsylvania rifle corps.

Throg's Neck is an island turned into a peninsula by a causeway and a bridge, and formed part of the old Borough Town of Westchester. It is upward of two miles in length and encircled by Eastchester Bay, the Sound and Westchester Creek, being separated on the west and north from the mainland by the narrow creek and by a marsh. The causeway, terminated at the west end by a plankbridge, crossed this marsh and creek, and led to the mainland. The upper extremity of the creek was passable at low water, in several places.

With a view to the defense of this pass, the two reconnoitring officers made a careful examination of the causeway. Contiguous to the plankbridge which connected the village of Westchester with the west end of the causeway stood a tidemill. Near the western extremity of the bridge, being the side occupied by the American army, there was at this time deposited a long range of cordwood, which was piled in such a manner as to cover effectually a party engaged in defending the pass.

After a full view, Heath directed Colonel Hand to fix upon one of the best subaltern officers and twenty-five picked men of his corps, and assign them to this pass, as their alarmpost at all times. In case the enemy should make a landing on Throg's Neck, this officer was to be directed, immediately to take up the planks of the bridge, and to have everything in readiness to set the mill on fire; but not to burn it unless the riflemen should be unable to check the advance of the enemy. Colonel Hand was also directed to assign another party to the head of the creek, and to reinforce both, in case of a hostile descent. He received at the same time, ample assurances of support in exigency, and made his arrangements accordingly.

After the arrival at New York of the Royal armament, the secure possession of the Hudson River, formed a subject of great anxiety, both with the Continental and State Congress. During the summer, numerous large hulks and heavy chevaux-de-frise had been placed and sunk in a line across the river at Fort Washington, for the purpose of effectually blocking up the passage; and additional obstructions were in the course of preparation, consisting principally of ships filled with stone and which were nearly ready to be submerged in the channel. The river at this point was commanded by batteries on the York and Jersey shores.

On board the sloop at anchor, near the obstructions, with his celebrated machine for submarine explosion, called the American turtle or torpedo, was the ingenious Mr. David Bushnell of Saybrook in Connecticut, anxiously waiting for an opportunity of blowing up his Majesty's men-of-war.

Four galleys mounted for the most part with either one or two heavy guns and with swivels, and having enterprising officers and select crews, were stationed above the obstructions, ready to attack the enemy's vessels the moment they should be brought to, by the chevaux-de-frise. The river at this point, on either shore, was so completely commanded by the American batteries, and the obstructions and other defenses in aid, were in such a state of forwardness, that it was thought no hostile vessel would be able to pass Fort Washington. This opinion, however, was soon proved to be the result of illusion.

For some weeks, a British squadron had been lying opposite Bloomingdale, where they supported the left flank of the King's army, and their dangerous proximity to the flotilla at Fort Washington, called for the utmost vigilance on the part of the Americans.

In the beginning of October, Lord Howe and his brother the general, determined to send a detachment of frigates above Fort Washington, in order to secure the command of the Hudson. Captain Parker was chosen for the execution of this service, having under his command, the *Phoenix* and *Roebuck*, each of forty-four guns, and the *Tartar* of twenty guns. Accordingly the two former of these frigates, on the 4th of October, sailed up the North River, and joined the other ships which lay at anchor off Bloomingdale.

This accession to the enemy's naval forces, rendered their contiguity still more alarming, and the fleetest of the galleys, named the Independence and commanded by Captain Baker, was ordered to drop down about a mile below Fort Washington, where she closely watched the proceedings of the hostile fleet.

Northerly winds prevented the British ships from proceeding up the river until the 9th of October. On the morning of this day, the Independence was on the lookout as usual, but the captain was absent, and the galley under the command of the lieutenants Putnam and Cleaves. It was about seven o'clock when these officers observed the hostile ships below, to be moving. They immediately piped all hands to quarters and signalized the news to their companions above; but did

not quit their station until they perceived that all the American vessels were under way. They then hove about, and stood up the river after their comrades. Having passed the chevaux-de-frise, they overtook two new ships, intended to be sunk in the channel, and spoke to Captain Cook who had charge of them, asking what he intended to do. Cook answered that he should stand up the river, as there was not water enough to go into Spyt den duivel Creek. The whole flotilla which had been at anchor off Fort Washington, was now under full sail, and as the wind was moderate, the Americans gained upon their pursuers, and hopeful of escape, were encouraged to exertion, and kept steadily along.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning, when the three hostile frigates with their tenders approached Fort Washington, standing up the river before a gentle southern breeze. Commodore Parker in the *Phoenix*, led the way. A heavy fire was instantly opened upon the enemy, from the forts and batteries on Manhattan Island, and from those belonging to the opposite post at Mount Constitution on the Jersey shore, which a few days afterward, took the name of Fort Lee. The men-of-war to all appearance, sustained but little injury from the batteries, and were not impeded in the least by the chevaux-de-frise or hulks. Four days afterward, in writing of this affair to the Maryland Council of Safety, Colonel Ewing referring to the commander of one of the frigates, Captain Parker probably, says: "One gentleman, seemingly in command walked the second deck as if nothing were the matter, although seven forts kept firing constantly upon the ship. What damage was done is uncertain, but believed to be very trifling." From the report, however, which was subsequently made to Lord Howe by the British commodore, it appears that the ships suffered much in their masts and rigging; and that a lieutenant, two midshipmen, and six men were killed, and eighteen wounded; the loss falling principally upon the *Phoenix*.

The men-of-war kept on their course before the wind, while the American vessels, scudding ahead of them, stretched all their canvas and made every effort for escape. For a

while the hostile parties continued to make about the same headway, and the fugitives were full of hope. But this was of short duration, for the breeze freshened, and it soon became apparent that fortune was in favor of the pursuers. Near the mouth of the Spyt den duivel, they overtook a schooner laden with rum, sugar, wine and other supplies for the American army, which they captured, together with a vessel lying at anchor. They next overhauled the sloop having on board Bushnell's American Turtle, and it was supposed that they were well aware of what the cargo consisted, for they continued firing into her until she went down to the bottom of the Hudson. "This machine," says Heath, in speaking of the Turtle, "was worked under water. It conveyed a magazine of powder, which was to be fixed under the keel of a ship, then freed from the machine, and left with the clock-work going, which was to produce fire when the machine had got out of the way. Mr. Bushnell had great confidence of its success, and had made several experiments, which seemed to give him countenance; but its fate was truly a contrast to its design."

Two of the galleys and most of the small craft made out to enter Spyt den duivel Creek, where they found protection from either shore. Captain Cook, afraid to run up the creek on account of its shallowness, kept on with the ships; but was compelled to drive ashore at Philipse-Mills. The other two galleys, of which the Independence was one, were fast sailers and confidently believed that they could keep ahead of their pursuers; but the wind freshened more and more, and the enemy gained so fast upon the fugitives, that soon after eleven o'clock, the former began to fire at them with their bow-chasers, and at noon overreached them. This caused them to bear in shore. At half past one, escape had become impossible, and the galleys were run aground above Dobbs Ferry. The crews at first, attempted to save their arms and baggage; but a heavy cannonade soon compelled them to jump overboard and swim ashore, where they concealed themselves in the bushes, until driven from their hiding places, by repeated broad sides of grapeshot. The

enemy then took possession of the two galleys, and got them off. These fine vessels, were in after years of great service to the Royal commanders in their operations up the Hudson, where the Independence figured in the King's service, under the new name of the Dependence.

Details of these occurrences, by different expresses, were brought to Washington in the course of the afternoon. His first solicitude was for the safety of the two new ships, which had run aground near Philipse-Mills; to secure which, he instantly sent up a party of artillery, with two twelve pounders, and a detachment of a hundred riflemen. Later in the afternoon, when word was brought that the enemy had landed a body of troops at, or near Dobbs Ferry, he ordered General Heath to dislodge them.

Heath acted upon this occasion, with his usual promptness. Without a moment's delay, he placed Colonel Sargeant, at the head of a force, consisting of five hundred infantry, forty lighthorse, two companies of artillery, having with them two twelve pounders, and a howitzer, ordering him to march immediately upon Dobbs Ferry, with all possible expedition, and to drive the British back to their vessels. Before these troops could reach the ferry, a party from one of the frigate's boats, had plundered and set on fire a Continental store house situated there, and had then withdrawn.

The British works across Manhattan Island were completed about the 10th of October, and General Howe determined to prosecute without delay, his movement against the rear of the Americans; while Lieutenant-general Earl Percy, with two brigades of British and one of Hessians, remained in the redoubts for the protection of New York.

Eighty or ninety flat boats and small vessels, were assembled at Kipp's Bay; and on the night of the 11th, an embarkation of the troops was made, under the direction of Commodore Hotham. Early in the morning of the 12th the fleet sailed down the Sound. A thick fog prevailed, when the boats entered the then dangerous passage that conducted through Hellgate. Several boats, caught in one of the whirlpools, and carried round and round toward the center, were

violently dashed against each other. For a while, the British officers apprehended the most disastrous consequences, but by skillful management, and extraordinary exertions, on the part of the oarsmen, they effected the passage without material damage, except such as arose from the oversetting of an artillery boat; an accident which occasioned the loss of three men and two field pieces.

The enemy then coasted along, beyond Morrisania. General Howe's chief guide, upon this occasion, was a gentleman of consideration, from the lower part of Westchester County. By this person's advice, the British commander was induced to disembark at Throg's Point, and the Carysfort frigate was placed so as to cover the descent; which took place about nine in the morning, Admiral Lord Howe being present along with his brother. The force that landed at this time was about four thousand strong; consisting of the guards, light infantry, reserve and Donop's corps.

After completing a debarkation at Throg's Point, the British forces formed, and their advance pushed forward immediately to secure the only safe pass there was to the mainland. But General Heath was ready for them. On their first landing, Colonel Hand's select party of twenty-five riflemen, dismantled the bridge, under the direction of Major William S. Smith, afterward the son-in-law of President John Adams.

In the action of the 16th of September, on Harlem Heights, Major Smith was wounded and fell from his horse, while serving as aid-de-camp to Major-general Greene. He was thereupon taken to Westchester where he remained under the hands of his surgeon, until the approach of the King's army, when he rose from his bed, and was permitted to take command of the subaltern's detachment. Before the British vanguard reached the causeway, Hand himself was on the spot with the main body of his regiment, and under cover of the woodpiles, opened a fire across the creek, upon the foremost ranks of the enemy; which put a stop to their farther progress in that direction. The Royal advance then hastened to the passes further up the creek, and attacked the riflemen posted there; attempting to force their way to the

main. The Americans stood firmly upon the defensive, until the arrival of reinforcements from General Heath. This prudent and sagacious commander, when he heard of the hostile landing, immediately ordered Colonel Prescott of Bunker Hill celebrity, with his regiment, and Captain-lieutenant Bryant of the artillery, with a three pounder, to strengthen Colonel Hand at the causeway; while Colonel Graham of the New York line, with his regiment, and Lieutenant Jackson of the artillery with a six pounder, were at the same time directed to support the other detachment. Colonel Graham arrived before any advantage was gained by the enemy, and drove them back. Disappointed in not securing a passage to the main, the British commander now prepared to encamp on the Neck. Other troops disembarked, and joined him in the afternoon. While the riflemen and yagers were engaged in picking each other off by firing across the creek and marsh, the American and the British general, each threw up a work at his own end of the causeway. When a good object offered, Bryant and Jackson saluted the enemy with their field pieces.

Howe was deeply mortified when he discovered that he had landed upon an island, and was unable to operate against the American army. Some of his own officers, at this time, in their letters home, amused themselves at his expense, by writing the most ridiculous accounts of his insular position. Losing his usual courtesy in the surrounding perplexities, he himself sent for his principal guide and addressed him to this effect: "Mr. P. It was by your advice that I came to this place. You must find some way of getting me on the mainland, and that, too, speedily. There are some reasons for supposing that you have acted treacherously, and if they prove correct, my provost-marshal shall do his duty."

Washington was upon the spot with reinforcements soon after Howe landed, and at once ordered additional works to be thrown up at all places where the creek and marsh might be crossed at low water. He felt confident that the American lines could not easily be forced at this point. In a letter written the next day to the president of Congress, he says:

"The grounds from Frog's Point are strong and defensible, being full of stone fences, both along the road and across the adjacent fields, which will render it difficult for artillery, or indeed any large body of foot, to advance in any regular order, except through the main road. Our men, who are posted on the passes, seemed to be in great spirits when I left them last night."

On the 14th General Charles Lee arrived in camp from the South, and joined the grand army. He had acquired a great military reputation, and was welcomed with enthusiasm by the soldiers, who expected extraordinary results from his abilities. At the moment of his arrival, the American commander-in-chief was absent, being engaged with the general officers of the army, in reconnoitring the grounds in the vicinity of Throg's Neck. Lee at once rode forth and joined them. Washington immediately gave him command of all the troops posted between Harlem River and the Sound, now more than half of the army; but desired that he would not exercise his office for a day or two, in order that he might make himself acquainted with the circumstances and duties of the post. General Heath in the meanwhile continued in the command.

The long established mode of conducting public affairs in the United States, "required that every important measure should be the result of consultation and should receive the approbation of a majority." General Washington therefore, in compliance with the opinions and usages of the people, called in council the general officers on the 16th, and laid before them the propriety of removing the American army from its position, in order to counteract the operations of the enemy. A long and animated debate ensued. General Lee whose experience and late success gave him great weight, strongly urged the absolute necessity of the measure. "After much consideration and debate," say the Proceedings of the Council of war, "the following question was put: 'Whether it having appeared, that the obstructions in the North River have proved insufficient, and that the enemy's whole force is in our rear at Frog's Point, it is now deemed possible in our present situation to prevent the enemy from cutting off

the communication with the country, and compelling us to fight them at all disadvantages, or surrender prisoners at discretion?' agreed, with but one dissenting voice, namely, General Clinton, that it is not possible to prevent the communication from being cut off, and that one of the consequences mentioned in question, must certainly follow."

It was at the same time agreed to retain Fort Washington as long as possible, in order to preserve a communication with the Jerseys. Although British vessels of war had already ascended the Hudson, above New York Island, at two different times, passing the chevaux-de-frise, upon each occasion without material injury; yet, "the hope was still cherished, that by increasing the obstructions in the river, ships might be prevented from passing them." The unfortunate decision of the council, to retain Fort Washington, was, no doubt much influenced by the urgent wishes expressed by the Continental Congress. Five days previously, this body passed a resolution desiring General Washington, "by every art and at whatever expense, to obstruct effectually the navigation of the river, between Fort Washington and Mount Constitution, as well to prevent the regress of the enemy's frigates lately gone up, as to hinder them from receiving succor."

The main body of the American army, now prepared to quit New York Island, the opinion of the Council of War, being almost unanimous in favor of the measure. Washington's forces were thereupon formed into four divisions, under the command, respectively of Major-generals Lee, Heath, Sullivan and Lincoln. "This last," says Sparks, "was not a Continental officer, but had recently come forward with a body of Massachusetts militia."

The strategy, which Washington now adopted, to counteract the British commander, was to conduct his army slowly, in a northerly direction, along the high grounds on the west bank of the river Bronx, always keeping in advance of his antagonist and constantly facing him as he moved on the eastern side. The Bronx, although narrow, is generally a deep stream, and ran for the most part through forests, at

the feet of a long succession of ridges. Wherever it was crossed by bridges, or where the fords were easy, the passage was commanded by breast works and redoubts, constructed for the purpose. Thus, in a short time, as it moved along, the American army formed a chain of fortified posts, which extended along the high grounds, on the west side of the Bronx, from the vicinity of Kingsbridge, to the village of Whiteplains, a distance of about thirteen miles. Strong detachments constantly patrolled in the immediate neighborhood of the Royal forces, and outguards were sometimes established on the eastern side of the Bronx. These dispositions on the part of General Washington, have perhaps never been surpassed in skill. They placed his troops constantly in strong positions, and enabled them to protect the roads, along which their stores and baggage were being transported, while they themselves daily faced, and outflanked the enemy.

Finding it a difficult and uncertain game, to lead his army against the Americans by land, General, now Sir William Howe, determined to make a virtue of necessity, by turning a bad position to the best account. Works were thrown up at several places, along the creek and marsh between Throg's Neck, and the mainland of Westchester, as though he intended to force his way across. These feints were continued for five successive days. During this time, he was concentrating his troops upon Throg's Neck. Three brigades, three battalions of Hessians, and other forces were drawn from Flushing, Staten Island and Harlem, and great quantities of provisions and military stores were brought to the Point. On the sixth day after landing, the preparations of the British general for a movement were complete.

Before the approach of day on the morning of the 18th, Sir William reembarked several corps in flat boats, which passed around Throg's Neck, and landed at Pelham Point, below the mouth of Hutchinson's River. The royal guide, for a while suspected of treason, had found means to reassure the British commander of his fidelity. He accompanied the advance guard upon the present occasion.

Among the first of the King's officers that trod the shores

of Pelham, was Captain George Harris of the grenadiers, who in after days became General Lord Harris, and was celebrated as the conqueror of Scringapatam. In a letter to his uncle, written about this time, he says: "On the 18th of October at one o'clock in the morning, the van of the army, consisting of the light infantry and grenadiers, embarked at Frog's Neck for the continent, and landed without opposition."

Soon after daylight, the Americans who were at the Westchester causeway, found that the main body of the British army at Throg's Neck, was under arms, and seemed to be moving toward the pass at the head of the creek. Heath and Washington were soon upon the spot. The division commanded by the former, got ready for action and took up a position which appeared well suited for opposing the enemy. Presently, however, it was found that the Royal forces were marching to the east side of Throg's Neck, where they embarked on board their flat boats, crossing Eastchester Bay, and landing at Pelham Point, with their artillery and baggage, a few hours subsequently.

Colonel Glover of General Lee's division, with a brigade, which he temporarily commanded, lay at this time at Milesquare to watch the enemy's movements. The brigade consisted of four regiments, commanded by Colonels Read, Shepherd, Baldwin and by Glover himself, and numbered in all, less than eight hundred men. Early in the morning, Colonel Glover ascended an eminence that commanded a view of the Sound, and from which he was in the habit of reconnoitring the hostile forces with a telescope. He discovered at once that the King's fleet in the East River, was under way. In a short time upward of two hundred boats filled with troops, and formed into four grand divisions, embarked from the upper part of Throg's Neck and stood across Eastchester Bay in the direction of Pelham Point. Although a young and inexperienced soldier, Glover saw the urgency of the case and acted promptly. He made his drums beat to arms, and sent an express with intelligence of the movement to General Lee, who was three miles off. He then put himself at the head of his brigade, and with about seven hundred

and fifty men, and three field pieces, hastened toward Pelham, to oppose the landing of the enemy.

A detachment of British light infantry, preceded by a small vanguard, was upon Pelham Heights before the American colonel had reached Hutchinson's River. He instantly detached a captain's guard of forty men, with directions to march rapidly and stop the enemy's advance. These orders were executed with celerity and skill, the men running the whole distance. When they approached the enemy, the latter halted. Having by this movement brought the British forces to a stand, Glover left his field pieces behind, upon a hill, crossed the river near Pell's bridge, already dismantled, and ascended the Heights of Pelham. He then made the most advantageous disposition of his followers. Colonel Read's regiment was posted on the left of the road leading to Pelham Point, with Shepherd's and Baldwin's in the rear upon his right. These troops for the most part, were well covered by stone walls. They were supported by Glover's regiment, which was stationed as a body of reserve, under the command of Captain Curtis.

With a modest appreciation of his own ability and a deep sense of the responsibilities about to be encountered, Glover watched in vain for the approach of General Lee or some superior of more experience than himself. The colonel was left to his own resources, and prompt action was requisite. He then rode forward to his advance guard, and led it against the enemy's detachment. When within fifty yards, he received the hostile fire, without the loss of a man, returned it instantly, brought down four of the British and maintained his ground till they had exchanged five rounds. By this time the Americans had two killed and several wounded, while they were much outnumbered by the British, whose two detachments having united, advanced to the charge with bayonets. Glover now ordered a retreat, and his bold captain led the men back without further loss. The enemy pursued with loud huzzas. In great excitement and some disorder, they ran forward to overtake the captain's guard, and in this state approached within thirty yards of the spot where Read's

regiment lay undiscovered behind a stonewall. His men then rose up and fired a volley which sent the King's light infantry back to their main army at the Point.

The Americans remained in nearly the same position for about two hours. At the end of this time, a strong force approached, under Brigadier-general Leslie and Sir William Erskine, with seven pieces of artillery. Colonel Read was posted under cover as before. When the King's troops were about forty yards from him, the whole battalion again rose up and fired. The enemy halted, and returned the fire until seven rounds had been exchanged, when Read retreated and formed again, in the rear and on the left of Colonel Shepherd. The Royal forces shouted and pushed on, until they reached the post occupied by the latter, behind a thick double stone wall. Shepherd now ordered his men to rise and discharge their muskets by grand divisions. By this means he kept up an incessant fire, and maintained his ground for a long while; causing his assailants to retreat several times a short distance off, where they formed again and returned to the combat. "Once," says Colonel Glover, "they retired so far, that a soldier of Colonel Shepherd's leaped over the wall and took a hat and canteen off a captain, that lay dead on the ground they had retreated from."

The officer thus despoiled, was Captain Evelyn of the light infantry belonging to the Fourth regiment, a gallant youth, not then dead but mortally wounded, who at the head of his company, was foremost of the enemy, when first they attacked Colonel Shepherd.

It was not long before the superior numbers of the enemy enabled them to dislodge Shepherd from his position. After their last repulse, they returned in greater force, brought forward their field pieces and completely outflanked the Americans, who were compelled to retreat and form in the rear of Baldwin's regiment. But they had now retired beyond the old Pell house upon the Heights, where the descending ground gave the enemy an advantage, and Colonel Glover found it necessary to retreat down the hill. He then forded Hutchinson's River and ascended the opposite height where he

had left his artillery. The enemy halted upon the commanding eminence they had gained, placed their artillery in battery, and commenced a cannonade which was answered, and was maintained by both sides until the approach of night. At dark, Glover received orders to take a new position in advance of the enemy. Here the weary soldiers of his brigade, after a hard day's fight, lay all night long as a picket guard in the open air by the roadside, without food or refreshment. The next morning they were relieved, and marched back to their encampment, where they broke a fast of more than twenty-four hours. Colonel Glover says, he had eight men killed, and thirteen wounded in the action. Some letters from officers of his brigade make the loss greater. From returns made to the British War Office, it would seem, that the King's troops had about eleven men killed, and forty-four wounded, the loss falling principally upon the First battalion of light infantry and on the Seventy-first regiment, the former belonging to Leslie's brigade, and the latter to that under Sir William Erskine.

The only American officer dangerously wounded, was the brave Colonel Shepherd, who received a musket ball in the throat, and underwent a long and painful confinement at Northcastle near Whiteplains, where he was immediately sent, for surgical treatment. Of the British officers, Captain Evelyn of the light infantry, belonging to the Fourth regiment was killed, and Lieutenant-colonel Musgrove and Lieutenant Rutherford were wounded.

General Lee reviewed Glover's brigade the next day, and returned thanks to both officers and soldiers for their adroit and daring conduct throughout the action. General Washington at the same time bestowed high praise upon them in his general orders.

The affair of Pelham Heights was in fact a stand made by Glover's small brigade, against the main body of the British army, and was conducted throughout by the Americans with the greatest skill, coolness and intrepidity. As the story of the skirmish spread abroad, fame exaggerated its importance, and when the news reached the headquarters of the Northern

army, General Gates on the 27th, in the general orders of the day, dictated as follows, viz.: "All the troops off duty to be under arms at one o'clock at their respective alarm posts, when, upon a signal given by the firing a cannon from the northeast angle of the covert way of the old fort, the whole will give three cheers for the glorious success with which it has pleased Providence to bless the arms of the United States on the 18th instant, in defeating the Army of the enemy near Eastchester."

After this action, the British army marched across the Manor of Pelham, and encamped with the right wing near the village of New Rochelle, while the left extended to Hutchinson's River.

On the next day, the Americans extended their left, in order to keep in advance of the King's forces, and Washington with the main body of his army commenced moving up along the west side of the Bronx. He determined, if the enemy persisted in their attempt upon his rear, to concentrate his troops at once, in a fortified camp at Whiteplains. The retention of Fort Washington having been determined upon in the council of war, it now became necessary to occupy it with a strong garrison. General Heath was directed to leave behind one of his regiments for the defense of Fort Independence.

Stores to a large amount, intended for the American army, were at this time deposited in and near the Church in the village of Eastchester. General Lee was anxious to secure them before they fell into the hands of the enemy, and accordingly, sent for Colonel Glover on Sunday the 20th, communicated the fact to him, and requested him to devise some plan for bringing them off. Glover found that the enemy had not yet taken possession of them. He sent out to the neighboring farmhouses, pressed fifteen wagons, and when night came, went to the village with his whole brigade, and carried off two hundred barrels of pork and flour. They had to approach so near the British camp upon this occasion, that Glover's advance parties heard distinctly the conversation of the enemy and the music of their bands. The

Royal forces received information, unfortunately, of Glover's exploit, and early the next morning, secured the residue of the stores.

About this time the King's army was joined by a strong force of light dragoons, consisting of the greater part of the Sixteenth regiment under Lieutenant-colonel Harcourt, and the whole of the Seventeenth, under Lieutenant-colonel Burch.

On the 21st, the right and centre of the Royal army moved to a position upon the high grounds, about a mile and a half to the northward of New Rochelle village, where they encamped for four days, on both sides of the road leading to Whiteplains. The British commander-in-chief left Lieutenant-general De Heister to occupy the former encampment for the present with three brigades, two of which were Hessians.

With the exception of a few independent companies of volunteers from New York, the only Provincial troops belonging at this time to Sir William Howe's army, consisted of a regiment of Royalists, called the "Queen's American Rangers," raised and commanded by Major Robert Rogers, celebrated for his exploits on the frontiers during the seven years war. He had been promoted to the rank of colonel, and his men were for the most part, natives of Long Island, Connecticut and Westchester. They were fresh recruits, well armed, but not yet in uniform, and were upward of five hundred strong. Rogers had been engaged with Stark, Putnam and Dalzell, in their most daring enterprises against the French on the Canadian frontier; at which time he was at the head of a celebrated corps of rangers who were called by his name. His fame as a partisan officer, enabled him to raise the corps he now commanded, in a few weeks, during the summer and autumn of 1776.

Colonel Rogers on the evening of the 20th of October, was ordered to take possession of Mamaroneck and to secure the stores deposited there for the American army. The next morning accordingly, about sunrise, he attacked and drove away some militia companies that guarded the place, and took possession of great quantities of Continental provisions in

the mills and houses along Mamaroneck River; consisting principally of rum, molasses, flour and pork. Having rendered this service to the Royal cause, he returned to the village and posted his regiment on a smooth field upon Heathcote Hill, in the rear of what is now known as the Delancey House. The station thus selected was memorable in the recollections of the aged. It was the spot which formed part of the ornamental garden, that at the commencement of the eighteenth century, surrounded the fine mansion built by Colonel Caleb Heathcote, Lord of the Manor of Scarsdale, and a member of the Royal Council for the province of New York. Rogers took possession of the village school house, which stood on the west side of the Boston highway, opposite to the road which leads to Delancey's Neck. He dismissed the children to their homes, and the place of their instruction became his quarters for several days subsequently. After nightfall sentinels were carefully posted in advance along the roads and passes in the directions of Whiteplains, Harrison, and Rye, while the approaches from the British camp were almost entirely unguarded; it not being considered probable that an enemy would venture so near the right wing of the Royal army. The Rangers had no tents and bivouacked around rail fires, made out of the neighboring fences.

Lord Sterling who was taken prisoner by the enemy at the battle of Long Island, and subsequently, on the 7th of October, exchanged for Governor Brown, was now with the army of Whiteplains. He had previously been stationed with his brigade, in the vicinity of this last place, and was well acquainted with the country between it and the Sound. He had obtained accurate information of the post occupied by Rogers on Heathcote Hill and formed an extemporaneous plan for the capture or destruction of the Queen's Rangers, which was at once carried into execution.

Seven hundred and fifty men of whom six hundred were Delawares and Marylanders, and the rest Virginians, were placed under the command of the redoubtable Colonel Haslet of the Delaware regiment, who had distinguished himself in the battle of Long Island, and was now selected to conduct

the enterprise against the enemy's post at Heathcote Hill. Lord Sterling had received the most accurate information of the position in which the Queen's Rangers lay. He knew, too, exactly where their sentinels were placed; and was acquainted with whatever precautions against surprise they had taken, as late as eight or nine o'clock at night. This, with his knowledge of the roads, enabled him to dictate the precise route to be taken by the detachment.

It was late at night when Haslet started. His forces, preceded by a corps of guides, marched in profound silence, along the road leading from Whiteplains to Mamaroneck, until they came to Cornell's Fork; when they took the cross road leading to New Rochelle and passing by the Quaker Meeting House. They were now in the immediate and perilous vicinity of the position taken during the previous day by the right wing of the British army. Wheeling to the left, they marched along the road that conducts from the Quaker Meeting House toward the Sound, until they arrived within half a mile of the highway from New York to Boston. The Americans now took to the fields, and advanced northeasterly against Heathcote Hill; following the guides, who acted also as pioneers and removed obstacles, while they pointed out the way. It was toward four o'clock in the morning, when they approached a lane on the other side of which they knew there was a sentinel. This sentinel was a young Indian, picked up by Rogers somewhere on Long Island. Major Green of the First Virginia regiment commanded the American vanguard, and himself and his men had some difficulty, during the prevailing darkness, in detecting the exact spot where the Indian was posted. When his station was ascertained, several of the guard crept along the ground, throttled and threw him down, before he had time to fire. But though taken and secured, the Indian proved refractory. Young and active, he kicked and struggled so violently, that one of the officers found it necessary to dispatch him with a sword thrust. Success seemed now as if about to crown the daring essay, and the destruction of the old partisan's regiment appeared inevitable, but fortune, who so often had be-

friended him in danger, stepped forward once more to his assistance.

Late at night, Rogers carefully walked the round of all his sentinels. When he reached the southwestern borders of his position, it seems to have occurred to him, that an attack might come from that quarter; where but little precaution against surprise had been taken, because it was not supposed probable that an enemy would venture to approach from the direction of the British camp. At any rate, he ordered Captain Eagles, with about sixty men, to take post as an outguard between Heathcote Hill and the place where the farthest sentinel was stationed, near the lane. Having made this change in his position, Rogers retired to his quarters, at the schoolhouse.

It happened, unfortunately, that the bivouac of Eagles and his company was exactly in Major Green's line of march, who stumbled in the dark upon the sleeping guard. The Americans called out for an instant surrender. Some of the rangers rose to submit and some to resist. Hughson of Dutchess County, one of their lieutenants, cried out, "Fire away boys, Fire ! never give up to the rebels," and fell dead a few moments afterward, fighting to the last. At this instant Colonel Haslet came up with the main body of his detachment, and completely surrounded the ranger guard, but Green's Virginians were by this time mixed up with the enemy, and all was darkness and uncertainty. In the midst of this confusion, the Captain of the rangers adopted the outcries of the Americans and shouted forth: "Surrender you Tory dogs ! Surrender." His men followed his example. For several minutes nothing was heard but execrations against Rogers and his Tories. Comrades, in the meanwhile, grappled with each other, and friend could not be distinguished from foe. By the cunning adoption and liberal use of such abusive names as were bestowed by the Whig soldiers upon their antagonists, Eagles and about one third of his men escaped during the continuance of the tumult.

The rangers were now on the alert, while most of Haslet's guides had either deserted or could not be found; but the

intrepid Colonel secured his prisoners and their arms and then immediately pushed forward at the head of his men toward Heathcote Hill.

The encounter between Eagles' company and Major Green's followers roused Rogers from his slumbers at the schoolhouse. Seizing a fusil which it was his custom to carry, he ran with the utmost speed to Heathcote Hill, where his men were at their posts but in great alarm, expecting an immediate attack from forces much superior. He had barely time to address a few words of encouragement to his soldiers, when Colonel Haslet advanced to the attack. The hoarse voice of the old "Indian-hunter" was now heard above the din of battle—"Steady boys ! steady ! Fire, Fire !" A volley first and then a rolling fire succeeded, which checked the Americans. The firm resistance of the rangers and the darkness of the night discouraged the Continental soldiers, who fancied they were now being led against an enemy strongly posted, and more numerous than themselves. Haslet determined in consequence, to prosecute his enterprise no farther. He therefore immediately retired by the route along which he had advanced, carrying with him thirty-six prisoners and most of his wounded, together with a variety of trophies and spoils, consisting principally of a pair of colors, sixty stand of arms and a quantity of blankets.

Haslet says his loss was three or four killed and about fifteen wounded. Among the latter, were Major Green and Captain Pope; the former being badly wounded in the shoulder, while the other received a shot in the leg.

The attack was well planned and bravely executed, and would no doubt have been completely successful had the assailants known exactly where Captain Eagles and his company lay. As it was, the affair has always been considered brilliant. The news was received with joy throughout the ranks of the American army, and led to several other attempts upon the enemy's outposts. Lord Sterling himself was highly pleased with the result, and thanked the officers and men of the detachment publicly, on the parade.

Those who were killed at Heathcote Hill were, on the next

morning, buried by the rangers upon the spot; but the wounded, both British and American, remained a long time upon the field, where their moans from pain and their cries for water were distressing. In the afternoon they were all conveyed upon ox-carts pressed from the neighboring inhabitants, to New Rochelle Church, for the time being converted into a hospital.

Although Major Green's collision with the picket guard alarmed and made ready for defense the main body of the rangers, there can be little doubt that the whole corps would have been either taken or dispersed, but for the intrepidity of their commander and the erroneous estimate of their numbers which the Continental troops entertained. Rogers was not popular except with his own men. His exterior was rough and unpromising, his conversation full of gasconade, and he was openly charged by some of the Royal officers with having broken his parole. They also imputed to him disobedience of orders and incapacity; asserting that he was directed to place himself a short distance in advance of the British army, instead of which, the post he took was two miles off, where he suffered himself to be surprised. A court-martial was called for, but Sir William Howe stood his friend. His activity and success in the capture of the Continental stores, and his coolness and courage in the defense of his post, saved him from a military investigation. But these were his last exploits. In the course of a few months he was compelled to resign the command of the Queen's Rangers. Subsequently, he appeared in arms on the northern frontier as a partisan for the King; but his services were not attended with either honor or success, and thenceforward, "the old Indian-hunter" walked in obscurity.

When the attempt against Rogers was reported to Sir William Howe, the Sixth brigade under General Agnew was immediately moved to Mamaroneck, where this officer took up a strong position, for the purpose of supporting the rangers. On the same day, Lieutenant-general Knyphausen with the Second division of Hessians and the regiment of Waldeckers landed at New Rochelle. These troops were ordered to re-

main there for the present, to cover the debarkation of stores and provisions.

Washington now hastened to concentrate his forces at Whiteplains, where the line for a fortified camp had been marked out several days previously, and where a corps of men had been engaged in throwing up works. The headquarters of the army were removed on the 21st from Morris' House to Valentine's Hill. Colonel Magaw, with about two thousand men, was left in command of Fort Washington, and Fort Independence was garrisoned by Colonel Lasher's regiment, which belonged to General Heath's division.

At about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st, General Heath's division marched for Whiteplains, from their camp above Kingsbridge, taking with them, besides their light field pieces, two heavy iron twelve pounders. It was about eight o'clock when they passed General Lincoln's quarters, on Valentine's Hill. Here Washington was to pass the night, and Heath waited upon him to receive his particular orders. Heath was advised by the commander-in-chief to send forward one of his regiments, and occupy the road which crosses the Bronx near Ward's House, in order to secure his right flank from any annoyances that might be offered by British patrols.

It was four o'clock on the ensuing morning that the division ascended Chatterton Hill, upon the borders of Whiteplains, after having marched the whole night. The instant he reached the summit, Heath noticed many successive flashes of light, proceeding apparently from the other side of a field across which he was marching. A captain with a party of men was ordered out to ascertain the cause of this appearance, but the officer returned and reported that he was unable to make any discovery. This phenomenon remained a mystery, until the return of Colonel Haslet's detachment from Mamaroneck. It was then ascertained that the transient lights which had alarmed the American general proceeded from Heathcote Hill, seven or eight miles distant. They were, in fact, the flashes of the muskets discharged by the Queen's Rangers, when attacked by the main body of the Americans; the ocular

deception being caused by the height of the ground and the darkness of the night.

During this day, General Heath moved his division and took post on the strong grounds which lay north of the Court House, and commanded the road to Connecticut. His men were immediately set to work in throwing up field works for the protection of his camp. In the course of the succeeding night, he was joined by the division of Sullivan. The whole American army was now assembled at Whiteplains, with the exception of the divisions commanded by Lee and Lincoln, which still maintained their position at Milesquare on the west bank of the Bronx, between Valentine's Hill and Kingsbridge, from whence they watched the movements of the Royal forces, and covered and secured "the heavy baggage and military stores, which, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining wagons, could be but slowly removed to a place of safety."

After their successful skirmish on Pelham Heights, Colonel Glover's men were eager for another enterprise, and on the 22nd he complied with their wishes by allowing a corporal and two privates to reconnoitre. These adventurers thereupon advanced boldly to the British camp, and brought off a number of fat cattle.

At five o'clock the next morning, the King's troops were startled by a heavy firing of small arms near the left of their encampment. It was a skirmish between Colonel Hand of General Lee's division and a Hessian scouting party. Hand, at the head of two hundred and fifty of his Pennsylvania riflemen, waylaid and encountered the Hessians, whose numbers were about equal to his own, in the fields northeast of Ward's House. They had been below patrolling, and were returning back loaded with plunder. Hand from his ambush fired upon and then charged them. They fled in great disorder, leaving their booty behind, and were pursued by Major Ross and a part of the Pennsylvanians, until they gained the left of the Royal camp. Here Ross attempted to capture a British officer on horseback, but the latter wheeled about and rode furiously along the lines, shouting to the

extent of his voice, "The rebels are upon us with all their forces ! turn out ! turn out !" The alarm became general, the drums beat to arms, and in a few minutes the Royal troops were on the alert preparing to resist an attack. When the true state of the case was disclosed, a detachment was sent out, which buried the dead and brought in fourteen of the wounded soldiers upon doors and window shutters, taken from the neighboring houses. The sufferers were immediately sent in carts to the East River, where they were placed for treatment on board a hospital ship. Ten of the Hessians were killed and two taken prisoners.

In the afternoon, Colonel Glover sent out a scouting party, drawn principally from his own regiment. When the commanding officer approached the hostile camp, he concealed his detachment behind a stone wall, and in order to draw the enemy toward his ambuscade, sent forward the corporal and two soldiers who had distinguished themselves during the preceding day. This time, they went directly in the rear of the Hessian camp, but the bold intrusion was presently discovered and the adventurers became fugutives. When the pursuers had approached sufficiently near, the Massachusetts scouts suddenly attacked and drove them back to their grounds in great confusion, killing or wounding eight or ten, and taking three prisoners. One of the killed was a mounted officer, whose horse was taken and brought off. The only loss sustained by Glover's men, was one private, belonging to Colonel Baldwin's regiment, who was mortally wounded.

The American commander-in-chief arrived at Whiteplains some time in the afternoon of the 23rd, and established his headquarters on the main street of the village, near the Presbyterian Church. A few hours afterward, the three regiments commanded by Colonels Tyler, Huntingdon and Throop of General Parson's brigade, and Heath's division, moved and took post at the head of King Street, between Rye Pond and "The Duke's Trees."

During the night of the 23rd, several of the enemy's ships of war, that had lain off Teller's Point, fell down and anchored near the left bank of the river, between Dobbs Ferry

and the Philipse Manor House, for the purpose of preventing the Americans from bringing their stores from below by water, and from removing those that had been landed at the last two places.

On the 24th, General Lee issued orders for the march of the whole corps under his command, to commence at seven o'clock the next morning.

A quantity of Continental stores had been deposited at Dobbs Ferry, which could not be removed in consequence of one of the enemy's vessels of war having anchored close in to the landing. She was permitted for one day to lie there undisturbed, but during the night, two heavy field pieces were sent over from Whiteplains. At daybreak on the 25th the American artillerymen opened a fire against her. She weighed anchor and hoisted sail, but could make no way for want of wind, and her crew were at length obliged to put out their boats, and tow her off, a slow operation, in which, although assisted by her comrades, she was exposed to a continual fire. She was hulled, it was said, eleven times, and was glad to find safety in another station.

On the same morning General Lee broke up his camp at Milesquare, and moved his whole corps with great caution, along the enemy's front, toward Whiteplains. The following was his order of march. A subaltern's command, twenty-five in number, led the way, followed by a field officer with one hundred and fifty men, as an advanced guard. General Nixon's brigade led the main column, to which the field pieces succeeded. Next to the field pieces came General Lincoln's division, and Colonel Glover closed the march; a captain with a company of men forming the rear guard. The rifles under Colonel Hand formed a right flank column, from which small parties commanded by sergeants were detached still farther to the right, in Indian file, as flankers to the right column. The baggage marched in front of Glover's brigade till the army arrived at the fork of the roads leading to Whiteplains and Dobbs Ferry, where it filed off to the latter under the escort of Howe's regiment.

In this order, the two divisions under General Lee marched

slowly and silently, along the rough highways of a broken and hilly country; and in the afternoon formed a new encampment, upon the heights of Tuckahoe, nearly opposite Ward's House. Here they rested for a day and a half. Although assisted by the teams and wagons belonging to the main army, Lee was not able to transport the whole of his stores and his artillery at the same time. A large quantity of provisions which he was unwilling to lose was left behind at Milesquare; and he probably wished at the same time to interpose as long as possible between Sir William Howe and the North River.

In the course of this same morning, Lieutenant-general de Heister effected a junction with Howe, and the whole army in two columns then moved forward about three miles, and took a position along the easterly side of the old New York and Whiteplains post road, with the river Bronx in their front; the right of their line being now at the distance of four miles only from Washington's camp. This movement caused great alarm at Whiteplains. About two o'clock in the afternoon, it was reported at headquarters, that three or four detachments of the enemy were on their march, and had advanced as far as Barker's House in Scarsdale. This intelligence was soon confirmed by persons sent out to reconnoitre. The main body of the British army was supposed to be on its march, and a general attack was momentarily expected. The American drums beat to arms, the troops were ordered to their several posts, and the whole army placed in battle order; but toward evening it was ascertained that the enemy had halted and formed a new encampment.

The dangerous vicinity of the British army now placed Washington more than ever upon the alert. During the night, he sent General Putnam, with eight regiments and discretionary powers of action, against the enemy at Scarsdale. The veteran general hoped, by a silent and rapid march, to surprise the right of the Royal forces; but unfortunately, while yet at a distance from them, he fell in with one of their patrols, which gave the alarm and rendered an attack inexpedient.

Sir William Howe's intentions became every day more apparent. He moved his army directly forward in large columns, scarcely ever detaching parties upon lateral expeditions, however near or promising the objects might be. He persisted to the last in reserving his strength for a pitched battle; and even allowed General Lee to encamp in his neighborhood and retreat unmolested along his front; although that officer's position was a full day's march distant from Washington's camp, and bad in other respects.

The ground left vacant by the removal of General Lee's army was soon traversed by the enemy. A captain, with a company of soldiers, was in charge of the provisions that had been left behind. About noon on the 26th, this officer was surprised by a detachment of the King's troops, consisting of one hundred dragoons and about as many infantry; and was compelled to abandon the stores and retire to Fort Independence. The dragoons followed him a short distance, but he escaped by taking to the woods. After this, the enemy continued their march to the North River, and took possession of Philipse Manor House.

Early on the ensuing morning, the British detachment returned to the left wing of their main army. During the course of their march, they encountered several American scouting parties, which the horsemen charged, or pursued with loud shouts and brandished swords. The fine horses, splendid arms, and sudden movements of the Royal dragoons filled the American troops, at this time, with great apprehension. This was not to be wondered at in soldiers who had never before witnessed the rapid evolutions and formidable appearance of a body of well trained cavaliers. The Continental generals became fearful of the consequences. During the afternoon of this same day, General Washington issued a general order instructing both officers and soldiers, that in a country so broken as Westchester, and so intersected by fences, no foes were more inefficient than dragoons. They could seldom leave the road, so that infantry might always attack them to advantage, from adjacent woods or thickets, and from fields inclosed with stone

walls; where mounted men could seldom venture to follow an assailant.

For the purpose of encouraging enterprises against these new adversaries, Washington further proclaimed in the same order, a reward of one hundred dollars, for every trooper brought in with his horse and accoutrements; and so in proportion if the capture should not be complete. It was however some time before the American troops could in the open field, confront the British cavalry without uneasiness.

On the morning of this same day (Sunday the 27th) a heavy cannonade was heard throughout the American camps, which seemed to proceed from the direction of New York Island; and officers and volunteers immediately mounted and galloped off in quest of information.

This firing, which startled the troops under Washington and Lee, and which was maintained at intervals throughout the day, was caused by the approach of some of the enemy's vessels, supported by Lord Percy's brigades, against Fort Washington and Fort Lee. The following account of this attack or reconnoissance, is taken principally from General Greene's letters and from a letter which appeared at the time in the *Pennsylvania Journals*, and is attributed to Thomas Paine, the celebrated political writer, who witnessed the affair from Fort Lee.

At seven o'clock in the morning, the British frigates ascended the Hudson and came to anchor near Bourdett's Ferry, in the immediate vicinity of the Morris House, apparently with the intention of cutting off the communication between Fort Washington and Fort Lee. The foremost of these men-of-war lay directly opposite to Fort number One on York Island.

The enemy at the same time made their appearance in force, on Harlem Plains, between the advanced posts of the two armies. Lord Percy's intention probably was to test the strength and countenance of the Americans, and if he found them weak and wavering, to push through the lines and drive them into the fort; while on the other hand, if they turned out in numbers and appeared firm, he meant,

under cover of his artillery, to reconnoitre their position closely, and then to retire. On Lord Percy's advance, Colonel Magaw, who commanded on New York Island, ordered the lines to be manned by troops encamped in the vicinity. The ships endeavored to dislodge them by an enfilade on their right flanks. A barbette battery, on the high hill to the left of the ferry on the Jersey shore, opened on the frigates, and fired down a considerable time, but without much effect. When the cannonade from the summit of the Palisades ceased, Colonel Magaw sent down to Fort number One a heavy gun, which fired fifty or sixty rounds and hulled the uppermost of the British vessels more than twenty times, being loaded frequently with two balls. Two eighteen pounders, at the same time, were brought down from Fort Lee, and planted on the west bank of the river opposite the ships. This fire from both shores was more than the frigates could stand. They hoisted all sail and used every effort to withdraw. The foremost slipped her cable and left her anchor, but could make no way, although towed by two of her own boats. At length her companion, perceiving her distress, sent two barges to her assistance, and the united exertions of the four boats at length dragged her beyond the reach of the American artillery.

"The confusion and distress," says General Greene, in his letter to the President of Congress, "that appeared on board the ship, exceed all description. Without doubt she lost a great number of men. Had the tide run flood one half hour longer we should have sunk her."

By this time Lord Percy had placed his field pieces and mortars in position, and commenced an attack upon the lines at Harlem Heights. His fire was resolutely answered by the Americans. Colonel Magaw was not sufficiently strong to quit the high ground in force. He permitted, however, small detachments of his men to skirmish with the light parties, British and Hessians, which approached him. The firing was pretty warm during most of the day, and a few men were killed and wounded on either side. "An Irish lad of about eighteen," says Graydon, "who belonged to my com-

pany, killed a British soldier and brought off his arms; which on the evening parade, were formally presented to him by Colonel Cadwallader, in reward of his bravery." During the latter part of the day, the firing was only occasional, and on the approach of evening, it ceased entirely. The ships then fell down the river, and the adverse troops which had advanced on Harlem Plains retired again within their respective lines.

In a letter to General Mifflin, Greene writes: "Our artillery behaved incomparably well. Colonel Magaw is charmed with their conduct, in firing at the ship and in the field."

In speaking of the pompous display, made upon this occasion by Lord Percy, Paine says: "It is now seven o'clock, and the firing has just ceased; but nothing extraordinary I believe has happened. We take this day's movement to be only a feint; at any rate it is little honorable to the redcoats."

Soon after the commencement of the Sunday cannonade near Fort Washington, the left and centre of the British army moved from the positions they had occupied for two days, in New Rochelle and Eastchester, with the intention of drawing nearer to their right. The news brought to General Lee was, that they had struck their tents and were marching in two columns, toward the Hudson. Lee saw the perilous situation in which he was likely to be placed, and acted with his accustomed promptness. He instantly broke up his encampment and put his forces in motion toward the main army, at Whiteplains. The rough and hilly highway along which he marched, is generally known as the Tuckahoe road, and it was filled for the space of four miles by the two divisions under his command, eight thousand strong, with their artillery and baggage, including a train of a hundred and fifty wagons, laden with stores and ammunition. In ascending several of the hills on this road, he was obliged to halt and double the teams, in open view of the enemy, and at no considerable distance from them. They made no attempt, however, to interfere with his dangerous retreat along their front. Had they done so, the total loss of his cannon and wagons could scarcely have been avoided. In this case he would

have moved his forces unincumbered, toward the Hudson, and then have united himself to the main army, by marching along the Sprain, or the Saw Mill River road. As it was, he spent the whole of a toilsome night in floundering along the Tuckahoe road; but arrived at Whiteplains, on Monday morning, in safety, with all his men and material.

A few days afterward, while a body of Continental troops lay at Northcastle, one of the American commanders, wishing to make use of a large quantity of corn stalks, made an arrangement with a Quaker farmer named William Carpenter, for all he could furnish from his corn then standing, and consisting of a field of twelve acres. To expedite the business, a detachment of the military was ordered out, which cut down, husked, and carried up the whole crop into his granary. All this was accomplished in a single day, and Friend Carpenter was much gratified with the operation. He manifested upon the occasion, the well known kindness of his disposition, by borrowing all the pots and kettles in the neighborhood, and making Indian pudding enough to give the soldiers a hearty supper of suppawn and milk, which they declared to be the greatest treat they had had since the commencement of the campaign.

During the civil commotions that preceded the declaration of independence, tea drinking was proscribed. Good Whig husbands generally found it easy to abstain from a decoction which was deemed unpatriotic and had become unpopular; but wives longed for the forbidden beverage and not unfrequently enjoyed it. During the summer of '76, however, tea became scarce in the interior of the country, and those who possessed a stock of the article, held it fast, in expectation of a great rise in its value. This led to female insurrection in several of the counties that bordered upon the Hudson River. Storehouses containing the coveted Bohea, at that time almost the only kind of tea in general use, were besieged by thirsty housewives, sometimes for several days in succession, and for the most part successfully; the owners being at length compelled to sell by retail, at reasonable prices.

In the month of August, a cavalcade of about one hundred Dutchess County women suddenly appeared at Fishkill, where the riders paraded before the house of Colonel Brinkerhoff, an extensive country merchant, "insisting," as the old newspapers say, "upon having tea at the lawful price of six shillings per pound." They scolded so long, and threatened so fiercely, that the gallant militia officer was glad at length to buy his peace by surrendering to them one chest from his store, upon the terms they proposed. The Amazons then withdrew, but Colonel Brinkerhoff dreaded their return, and in a few days afterward, sold out his entire stock of tea to some New York speculators, who for fear of another female outbreak, "precipitately forwarded the nefarious stuff," as the patriots termed it, to the North River, where it was put afloat and conveyed to Albany; the sloop that contained it making her escape, although guards to watch over her had been planted by the intrepid tea drinkers, upon both banks of the Hudson.

It was a short time after the battle of Whiteplains that the excursion, commonly called the "Westchester tea-party," took place. During the previous summer, a man whose name was John Arthur, and who for some time had kept a grocery store in the city of New York, was induced in consequence of the revolutionary troubles to break up his establishment and remove to a sequestered place in Westchester County, on the borders of Bedford, and of the town now known as Newcastle. He brought with him some articles of merchandise, part of his old stock in trade, among which was a quantity of Bohea tea.

Apprehensive of a foray, Arthur carefully concealed from female inquisition, the fact that he had in his possession sundry chests of the delectable leaf, but by some means it became whispered about, that such was the case. This news was carried from farm house to farm house, until at length it reached the country along the Hudson; where the good housewives had so long abstained from the bewitching infusion, that they began to forget its joyous qualities. The information that now came from the direction of Bedford,

brought back their old appetites. Their thoughts hovered about Bohea throughout the day, and they fancied its fragrance during the visions of the night. The tea was within their reach, and not many miles distant. Daughters of Eve as they were, the time soon came when they could no longer resist the temptation. As the giant in the nursery tale, when he had smelt the blood of the Englishman, gave way to his cannibal instincts and resolved, dead or alive, to have some; so the dames of Philipse Manor, when in dreams they had scented the treasures in their vicinity, felt their old tastes revive, and determined once more to enjoy the "liquor that they loved," by coming down upon the ex-grocer, Arthur, for the needful material. A rendezvous was consequently agreed upon at the most convenient place.

At the appointed time, upon an autumnal morning, upward of thirty females assembled, from the precincts of Sing-Sing, Tarrytown, Sleepy-Hollow, and Weekersqueeke, all mounted on horseback, and eager for the enterprise. As captain of their company, they unanimously made choice of Jonas Orser's better half, a woman of undaunted resolution who ruled her own household and influenced her neighborhood. Placing herself at the head of her forces, she at once put them in motion, toward Arthur's Hamlet.

For the first few miles, the march was uneventful, but at length they entered a district where they had never been before, and where from the number of the roads, and the distance of the farm houses from each other, they became bewildered, and unable to proceed with any certainty. In this state of perplexity, they pulled up at a place where the highway forked, and awaited the approach of some one, who might point out their proper route. Presently, a mounted traveler was seen approaching. As bad luck would have it, this was Arthur himself, who, a short time previously, had taken his departure from home, on a journey. When he came up, his surprise at the appearance of the cavalcade grew into astonishment, when the captain of the band inquired of him the way that most directly led to John Arthur's habitation. Arthur was a wary man, seldom off his guard,

and before he gave the tea hunters a direct answer, had the address to draw from them the object of their visit. He then accompanied them a short distance, and after having carefully indicated to them, the most circuitous of all the routes that led to his domicile, he himself took the shortest direction back, in order to put his castle in a posture of defense. This he was better enabled to do than most men would have been, for the females of his household were numerous and warlike; four of them being remarkable for prowess and personal strength, that is to say, his wife, her two maiden sisters, and an African girl, who was, or had been, a slave with a scarred face and ferocious aspect. Having warned his help-mate of the approaching danger, and having had a long experience of her energy in emergencies, Arthur quietly withdrew, being himself a man of peace and averse to female broils.

When at length the enemy appeared and surrounded the house, its Amazonian mistress was ready for them, and "laughed a siege to scorn," having previously barricaded the doors and windows of the lower story, and armed herself, her sisters and retainers, with tongs, pokers, spits and broomsticks. The assailants having been refused admittance, and set at defiance, proposed a parley; whereupon an upper window was opened. A demand for a box of tea, with promise of future compensation, was rejected. A similar requisition, upon payment of a just and proper sum, was also refused, but the commander of the post held out to the besiegers the promise, that when the master returned home, he should positively sell them what tea they wanted, provided they would now peaceably withdraw from the premises. After reconnoitring the fortress, Madam Orser, and her followers resolved themselves into a council of war, and the result of their deliberation was, that the garrison would probably make a desperate defense, that although the courage of the besiegers remained unshaken, and their ability to capture the place by a storm, was undoubted; yet that they were unwilling at present, to resort to bloody extremities, and concluded therefore, to accept the proposition made by Dame Arthur. The bold dragoons thereupon raised the siege and retired.

They were, soon after, according to the treaty stipulation, furnished with a large quantity of the much loved Bohea, and during the whole ensuing winter, their hearts were gladdened by its sprightly decoctions.

CHAPTER II

BATTLE OF WHITEPLAINS, ETC.

The camp which General Washington fortified at Whiteplains in the month of October, 1776, was situate upon the elevated grounds at or near the northern extremity of the village. It was defended by two lines of intrenchments nearly parallel to each other, about four hundred yards apart, and extending in a direction nearly northeast and southwest. At the spot where the works crossed the broad street of the village, a regular redoubt had been laid out. This however was not yet constructed. The right wing, covered by intrenchments and commanded by Major-general Putnam, extended along the side of Purdy Hill, north of the road leading to Dobbs' Ferry; and rested on the Bronx. The left wing under Major-general Heath stretched along Hatfield Hill, north of the road leading to Connecticut, till it approached a declivity inaccessible to an enemy and at the foot of which was Horton's millpond of nearly a mile in length. Washington himself took post in the centre.

Safely established in their new encampment, the American soldiers enjoyed a firm persuasion of their security. Awaiting the enemy's attack, they hoped by a general battle at this place, to decide the war. Different skirmishes, for the most part successful, had restored that self-confidence of which they had been deprived, after the retreat from Long Island. Their commander, however, saw clearly the defects and danger of his situation. He was alone withheld from falling back upon the strong grounds in his rear, by the difficulties he encountered in the transportation of his sick and wounded and military stores. Still, he determined to hazard a general engagement *here*, if pressed by the enemy. He was engaged, meanwhile, in searching out a more secure position, and

hoped to derive the time requisite for that purpose from the tardy movements of the British general.

The ground occupied by the left wing of the American army was so broken, so difficult to be assailed, and furnished so secure a retreat, that military works for its protection were scarcely necessary. Some slight defenses, only, were thrown up there, as a cover for musketry. The extremity of this wing, however, extended along a deep hollow, through which ran a small brook from the millpond above. East of this valley rose a very commanding height called Merritt's Hill, from which a part of General Heath's position might be enfiladed. The summit and southeasterly portion of this high ground was covered with wood. To this hill, Heath ordered Colonel Malcolm, with his regiment of New York infantry, and Lieutenant Fenno of the artillery, with a field-piece. These officers were directed to take post at the south brow of the hill and mask themselves in the skirts of the wood.

The weakest part of the American position was the centre which stood upon a gentle elevation. The slope of the hill in front, along the village road which ran from the Court House in a northwesterly direction, was gentle and very gradual. Ground so defective in natural strength required strong fortification. Yet the lines here were by no means formidable. The breastworks were not fraised, and the ditch was of a depth very inconsiderable.

The hill along which the right wing extended was steep and rocky. In addition to its intrenchments, the right flank was protected by the abrupt and precipitous termination of the hill at its southwestern extremity, and by a bend of the Bronx which ran immediately below. But the insecurity of the American camp on this side was great, arising from its contiguity to Chatterton Hill. This last was a commanding height, upward of a mile in length, situate about eight hundred yards to the west and south of the American right flank, from which it was separated by the Bronx, and by low meadows and marshy grounds. From the northern extremity of this eminence the American camp might be enfiladed down

to its centre. The occupation of the hill became in consequence indispensable. A militia regiment stationed there, had thrown up some works for its defense, but these being unfinished were of no utility.

After the 21st of October, the British commander-in-chief was engaged for nearly a week in concentrating his forces, with great caution, in an encampment, formed upon the elevated grounds which extend along the left bank of the Bronx, on the confines of Eastchester and Scarsdale. His design, all along, had been to force Washington to a general action, and the preparations for this purpose were now completed.

The morning of the 28th of October dawned with the promise of an Indian summer day of uncommon beauty. Before sunrise the drums beat to arms, and the royal army having formed in two columns, marched upon Whiteplains, northerly, across the Manor of Scarsdale. The right column was commanded by Sir Henry Clinton and the left by General de Heister, the former consisting for the most part of British troops and the latter of Hessians. Sir William Howe and his staff marched with the Hessian commander. The Sixteenth regiment of light dragoons, under Lieutenant-colonel Harcourt, accompanied Clinton's column, while the Seventeenth light dragoons under Lieutenant-colonel Birch formed part of de Heister's command. The grenadiers of the Hessian regiments, having some time previously been formed into a distinct corps under Colonel Count Donop, claimed and obtained upon this occasion, the post of honor on the right. Strong vanguards of light infantry and chasseurs with some guides, led the way. Numerous parties of these last and of pioneers, composed for the most part of the neighboring loyalists, followed immediately after, who levelled fences, removed obstructions, and prepared ways for the safe passage of men and artillery, across the impediments of the country. About three miles southeast of the American camp, the British army reached Secor's Fork. Here the left column took the western branch, for the purpose of advancing by the old York post-road; while the right continued its march through the fields, near the highway, leading from Mamaroneck to Whiteplains.

De Heister's column gained the post-road without opposition. Soon after this, his vanguard was attacked by Major-general Spencer, who, with about two thousand men, had been sent during the night, to watch the motions of the enemy, and had taken up a position, with the river Bronx on his right. These forces consisted principally of Wadsworth's brigade of Connecticut levies, that is to say, of troops raised for short periods, being in fact militia of a somewhat superior description. The Hessians were surprised and fell back upon their leading brigade, commanded by Colonel Rahl. They rallied, however, although under a heavy fire, and advanced to the charge in a few minutes afterward. Rahl with his brigade at the same time moved briskly forward, attempting to turn the left flank of the Americans. It now became necessary for the levies to retire. But while falling back toward the main army, they formed from time to time behind the stone walls with which the country abounded and fired upon their antagonists, whose efforts were constantly directed against Spencer's flanks, with the view of cutting off his retreat to the main army. The Hessians at length pressed forward in great numbers, and drove the American forces toward the Bronx, which they crossed by a ford near Chatterton Hill. Rahl at the head of his brigade, pursuing close upon the heels of Spencer's followers, passed the river at the same place and advanced about half way up the hill. Here, some of the levies or militia had been placed in ambush, behind a stone wall. They allowed their adversaries to approach within a few yards, and then poured in upon them a volley so unexpected and destructive, that the Hessians retreated down the hill immediately and crossed the Bronx in disorder.

Among the most active officers who took part in this skirmish, was the late General Benjamin Tallmadge of Connecticut, who in the campaign of 1776 served under General Wadsworth as his Brigade-major. When the regiments to which he was attached, under Major-general Spencer, were driven across the Bronx, he himself remained upon the eastern bank until they had all passed over. The Hessians then suddenly

approached within musket-shot and he was compelled to put spurs to his horse. He had gained the margin of the stream, which his horse was about to enter; when he was joined by an unexpected companion. This was Doctor Trumbull, one of the army chaplains, who was on foot. The Reverend gentleman had loitered too long upon the eastern side. Finding his situation at this moment perilous in the extreme, he chose the best means of escape at hand, and sprang on horseback behind the Brigade-major. But uninvited and unseen as the chaplain was, he leaped with such force as to carry his friend, and the saddle and accoutrements of the latter, together with himself, headlong into the river. This so entirely disconcerted the two officers, that by the time they reached the opposite bank of the Bronx, the Hessian troops were about to cross it, and considered the fugitives as their prisoners. They however both escaped, though loudly called upon to surrender.

But Tallmadge's situation was not yet much improved. He soon found himself between the adverse fires of his friends and enemies, and in consequence dismounted and filed off to the right. When the Hessians were repulsed, he again mounted and rode along the valley of the Bronx in search of General Washington, to whom he reported the situation of the troops on Chatterton Hill; the southern and southwestern slopes of which were now occupied by Spencer, who placed his levies under cover wherever it was practicable.

After his discomfiture, Colonel Rahl did not attempt to ascend Chatterton Hill a second time, but contented himself with taking possession of some elevated ground lying further south on the right bank of the Bronx. A moment's glance had revealed to this practiced soldier the fact that from this spot the right flank of the American forces on the hill might be assailed advantageously. Without orders, but without hesitation, Rahl took possession of the height. This bold and able movement, reported immediately to General de Heister, received from that officer his ready approbation.

During these movements on the west, the enemy's right column appears to have met with no opposition; the small

bodies of light troops which watched the hostile march on the east falling back before the royal advance.

While the King's army, with great pomp, was thus marching against the American camp, Washington, anxious for a position of greater security, had set forward to examine the grounds in his rear, attended by most of his general officers. He had been engaged in this reconnoissance for some time, when General Lee spoke out with characteristic self-confidence and boldness. Pointing to some heights which afterward were occupied by the continental army;—"Yonder," said he, "is the ground we ought to occupy."—"Let us go and view it," answered the commander-in-chief. They proceeded accordingly. While on the way, a light horseman suddenly came up on the spur, his horse almost out of breath and himself much excited. He instantly addressed General Washington,—"The British are on the camp, sir."—"Gentlemen," observed the general to those about him, "we have now other business,—follow me." They all then rode for the camp in full gallop. On arriving at headquarters, they found that the guards had been driven in, and the Adjutant-general, Read, reported that the troops were now at their proper posts, and the whole American army in complete order of battle. Washington then gave his parting orders;—"Gentlemen, repair to your respective posts and do the best you can."

The British army was not yet in sight from the American camp. The first solicitude of the American commander-in-chief was for the security of Chatterton Hill, to which place Colonel Rufus Putnam, the self-taught engineer, at the head of a detachment of militia, had been sent, early in the morning, with directions to throw up some entrenchments. Pursuant to order Colonel Haslet, with the Delaware regiment, marched immediately for that post and took until the arrival of a general officer, the temporary command of it and of the militia there stationed under Colonel Putnam. Several of the enemy's field-pieces were now directed against the Americans upon the hill. The second shot fired wounded one of Colonel Putnam's militia-men in the thigh; upon which, says Colonel Haslet, "the whole regiment broke and fled

immediately, and were not rallied without much difficulty." Shortly afterward Haslet was superseded by Brigadier-general McDougall, who came up with his whole force. This last officer had, for several days, been stationed in the woods near Barnes' or Hart's Corner, about two miles southwest of Whiteplains, in order to cover the retreat of General Lee's division. Lee had broken up his camp at Milesquare. His forces had been put in motion to join Washington, on the morning of the 25th. Bad roads, the proximity of the King's army, and want of draft-horses for the baggage and artillery, had rendered his march an extremely slow and arduous operation. It was not until this moment that his rear-guard passed into the encampment, behind the troops on the hill, but in full view of the enemy.

McDougall's brigade consisted of five regiments; that is to say, the remains of the First and Third New York regiments under Colonel Ritzema, Smallwood's Marylanders, Webb's levies from Connecticut, and Brooks' Militia of Massachusetts. These regiments had been so materially reduced from the combined effects of hard service, sickness, and casualties, that the aggregate forces under McDougall on Chatterton Hill, including the Delawareans and Putnam's militia, did not much exceed sixteen hundred men. In addition to these, Spencer's Connecticut levies were in the fields further south, upon the right; but McDougall appeared to have been ignorant of their situation and numbers, and in fact, they were there accidentally. McDougall now put his forces in battle array. Brooks' and Putnam's militia were ordered to take post upon the right, toward the southern slope of the hill, behind a stone wall, supported by the Delawareans under Haslet. The Marylanders, New Yorkers and the regiment of Connecticut levies were formed as the centre and left; Webb being upon the extreme left and Smallwood upon the right centre. McDougall's post was strong, and, under adverse circumstances afforded a secure retreat. His communication with the main army was perfectly open; two bridges crossing the Bronx in his rear and that river being in most places fordable.

As the British forces now came within sight of the village of Whiteplains, they were cannonaded from the American lines. The Royal artillery-men thereupon, from time to time halted, unlimbered, and returned the hostile fire. This was continued a short time, but without much effect on either side. Soon after ten o'clock, the whole body of the enemy appeared in full view from the American camps and from Chatterton Hill, dividing, as they made their approach, from two, into eight columns. At first Sir William Howe's movements seemed to be directed against the American centre, but suddenly his troops were halted in the wheat fields, while the general officers assembled on horse-back and deliberated in council. Two of the enemy's columns in the meanwhile approached the American left. The foremost of these was preceded by a vanguard of horsemen, who not aware of their vicinity to a hostile post, leaped the inclosure of a field at the foot of Merritt's Hill. Here they received a shot from the field piece of Lieutenant Fenno, pointed with such accuracy, that it covered them with a shower of earth and stones and unhorsed one of their number. They then galloped out of the field. These columns advanced no farther toward the American left, but halted for a short time, and then inclined toward their centre; the officers in command having apparently satisfied themselves with respect to the strength of General Heath's position.

While this reconnoissance was being made upon the American left, the enemy's council of war broke up. It soon became apparent that the British commander-in-chief, fearful for the safety of his left flank, would not venture to attack the American lines in front until he should have obtained possession of Chatterton Hill. Upon the highest grounds which extend along the eastern margin of the Bronx toward the southern extremity of Whiteplains, twelve or fifteen pieces of cannon, were at once placed in battery, and an incessant fire upon General McDougall's force on the hill shortly afterward commenced, preparatory to the attack which ensued.

By this time the main body of the British army had formed behind some rising grounds and patches of wood, nearly

parallel with, and at the distance of about a mile, from the American lines. In this position, the right wing of the British did not extend far beyond the American centre while their left stretched out in the direction of the Bronx.

Sir William Howe now prepared to make himself master of Chatterton Hill. He gave orders for a battalion of Hessians to pass the Bronx and commence the attack of General McDougall's detachment. This movement was supported by the second brigade of British under Brigadier-general Leslie, and by the Hessian grenadiers under Colonel Donop. Directions at the same time were given for Colonel Rahl to charge the right flank of the Americans with his whole force, after the Hessians and British should have advanced upon them in front. To give decisive effect to their operations, Lieutenant-colonel Birch with the Seventeenth regiment of light dragoons was placed under the command of Rahl.

It was about noon when the British demonstration against Chatterton Hill began. General Howe's whole army moved a short distance toward the Bronx. Soon after, the troops which had been selected for the attack marched rapidly forward. The display made by the royal battalions, as, while advancing to the attack or changing their positions, they passed along the ridges east and south of the American lines, was ever after spoken of, by those who watched the battle from afar, as the most splendid pageant, ever presented to their view. The day was one of transcendant brilliancy. Autumn was fast fading into winter, but the heat of this memorable noontide approached that of summer. Armed men drooped under its influence and cattle sought the shade. Banners and pennons scarcely moved in a breeze too gentle to float them out before the anxious beholders. The bands of twenty regiments sent forth strains of martial music, and loud war songs were sung by the grenadiers of Donop, as they moved from the extreme right, to join in the attack. But all these sounds were drowned at momentary intervals, in the thunders of the cannonade. The Americans, in general plainly clothed, and insufficiently armed, presented a striking contrast, to their royal antagonists, who were complete in ap-

pointments; and whose polished arms and superb equipments reflecting the rays of the midday sun, lighted up the south-eastern horizon with an effulgence that overpowered the sight. Near the Bronx, on the enemy's left, the approaching contest wore a more ominous aspect; for there, the smoke from the British artillery rose upward in lofty curls and hung over the field of battle, like the dark canopy of death.

Before one o'clock in the afternoon, the head of the enemy's column of attack had reached the Bronx. The hostile point of approach was about a mile or more south from the main body of the American army. In consequence of recent rains the river was unusually high, and its passage was extremely difficult, its bed, at the foot of Chatterton Hill, being much obstructed by accumulated trunks of trees which had fallen in from time immemorial, and by remains of ancient beaver-dams. When they reached the banks of the stream, the Hessians loudly expressed their unwillingness to ford it.

Preparations were thereupon immediately made, by artificers and men for the construction of a temporary bridge, by felling trees, and collecting rails, and other materials near at hand. But McDougall and his officers were not inattentive to these proceedings. Colonel Haslet, whose intrepidity and quickness of perception formed him for the battle field, had already suggested some changes in the formation of the forces on the hill, which were adopted by the American commander. When the Delaware Colonel perceived that the whole body of the royal army was directing its march toward Chatterton Hill, he again advised McDougall to vary his disposition, by sending some of his best troops to meet the enemy. This suggestion was also complied with, and the Maryland and the Third New York regiment were ordered forward. The columns under Leslie and Donop were now perceived rapidly approaching the Bronx.

"On my seeing," says Haslet, "the enemy's march to the creek begin in a column of their main body, and urging the necessity of bringing our field pieces immediately forward to bear on them, the general ordered one, and that so poorly appointed, that myself was forced to assist in dragging it

along the rear of the regiment. While so employed, a cannon-ball struck the carriage, and scattered the shot about, a wad of tow blazing in the middle. The artillery-men fled. One alone was prevailed on to tread out the blaze and collect the shot. The few that returned made not more than two discharges, when they retreated with the field-piece."

This piece of cannon, the only one made use of by the Americans upon Chatterton Hill, is said to have been commanded by Captain Alexander Hamilton of the New York artillery, in after years, a general under Washington and a statesman of celebrity.

Smallwood and Ritzema in the meanwhile had descended more than half way down the hill and commenced a vigorous attack upon the Hessians, while these were engaged in the construction of their bridge. The leading battalion of the enemy sustained a severe loss while halting upon the eastern bank of the stream; and some of the workmen at the bridge, killed or wounded, were seen falling headlong into the river. The Hessians for a short time were in extreme disorder.

General Leslie, fearful of the consequences, listened to the suggestion of his guide who offered to show him an easy ford, further down the stream. Turning to the first two supporting British regiments, the Twenty-eighth and Thirty-fifth, and appealing in a few words to their nationality, courage and loyalty, Leslie bade them follow him. They answered with cheers. Their leader, conducting them a short distance below, till he arrived at a practicable place, forded the Bronx at their head. Having gained the opposite bank, he led them to an immediate charge upon the regiments of Ritzema and Smallwood, which he hoped to overthrow by the bayonet. The King's soldiers rushed forward with spirit, but found that access to their antagonists was impracticable from the steepness of the hill, while they underwent at the same time a destructive fire of musketry. Leslie now fell back upon the troops advancing to his support. These consisted of his two other regiments, the Fifth and Forty-ninth, which had closely followed their commander, and of the Hessian soldiers. The leading Hessian battalion and the grenadiers

had either forded the river or crossed the bridge, the moment it was rendered passable; their emulation being inflamed by the sudden advance of the British brigade. The enemy's whole force now formed and marched northerly under cover of the hill, until having gained sufficient ground, they faced to the left. Their column then became a line, parallel with the Americans. They thereupon ascended the hill; but their advance was, from time to time, checked by the troops of Ritzema and Smallwood, who contested the ground with the utmost gallantry.

An attempt was now made by some of the enemy's light troops to turn the left flank of the Americans and so cut off their communication with the main army. When McDougall perceived this movement, he sent Colonel Webb farther to the north with injunctions to prevent the royal troops from executing their designs. With great promptness and regularity, Webb led his men to a favorable position near the Dobbs Ferry road, when he was presently attacked by the British and Hessians in numbers superior to his own. A sharp conflict ensued, but in the end, he drove back his antagonists and secured for McDougall a junction with Washington's right wing by way of Chatterton's bridge. Upon this occasion, the late unfortunate General William Hull was a captain in Webb's regiment, and is said to have distinguished himself for the first time in his military career.

When the King's troops had got about half way up the hill, the cannonade, which for more than an hour had been incessantly directed upon McDougall's forces, was suddenly put an end to by the enemy's officers, for the reason, that their own men would become endangered by its continuance. This was the signal for Rahl's coöperation, and that redoubtable officer soon made his appearance. His troops had been so skilfully concealed upon the height of which he had taken possession, that McDougall was ignorant entirely of there being any considerable force in that quarter. The Hessian colonel's appearance on the extreme right, at this critical moment, took the American general therefore by surprise. The detachment commanded by Spencer and the regiments

under Brooks and Putnam, however, which, stationed on the extreme right, were the first to meet the onset, changed their ground and took post so as to face the new enemy, now advancing from the south. The levies and militia showed, at first, all the signs of a stout resistance. When Rahl's column had approached sufficiently near, they gave him a volley; but at this moment Birch's dragoons suddenly appeared, advancing at speed, with kettledrums beating and trumpets sounding the charge. Panic-struck, by a sight to them so novel and unexpected, the levies and militia instantly fled. The British cavalry having managed to turn the left flank of their antagonists, cut off their retreat to the camp and chased them furiously over the hill in a westerly direction; killing and wounding some and making others prisoners. Notwithstanding the fierceness of the pursuit, it is related that about one hundred of the fugitives, urged by their officers, attempted a rally, after flying about half a mile; and that forming themselves into a solid body, they for a while offered to the horsemen an unavailing resistance; but that after losing many of their number, a few of the survivors surrendered and the rest escaped to the woods.

While General Leslie was conducting his column across the Bronx, a detachment of the Sixteenth light dragoons suddenly advanced from the enemy's right toward the American centre. This movement was made, ostensibly, for no other purpose than display. Its real purposes no doubt were, to distract General Washington's attention, and to examine more closely the strength of his position. They rode several times round the Court-House, scrutinized the intrenchments from each side of the main street, and remained for a while in undisturbed possession of the lower part of the village. Assurance increasing with impunity, they even had the audacity to approach within five hundred yards of the central works, where they brandished their swords, hurraed for King George, and sounded with their trumpets a flourish of defiance. The officer in immediate command of this part of the lines had received the most peremptory injunctions against making any use of his artillery without express permission.

Unable, however, to endure the bravado of the royal cavaliers, he directed two cannon to be discharged upon them simultaneously. One of these shots took effect in the midst of the enemy's squadron, killing or wounding one or two dragoons, and throwing another to the ground, whose riderless steed, maddened with terror, ran into the American lines and was taken. A precipitate retreat of the cavalry was the immediate consequence. The officer by whose orders the cannon were discharged, on reporting the circumstances to General Washington, was readily excused.

After Spencer's troops and the militia had given way before the British dragoons, the Delaware battalion retired northerly along the summit of the hill, toward the Dobbs Ferry road, but was overtaken and charged by the enemy and three of its companies were driven from the field. The other companies and all the officers of the regiment remained firm and were stationed by Colonel Haslet behind a fence. During the struggle thus made by the heroic Haslet, McDougall had witnessed the enemy's numerical superiority, and found himself assailed at once in front and flank. Perceiving that any further effort to hold his post would be unavailing, he retreated to the Dobbs Ferry road near Chatterton's bridge, where he halted the New York and Maryland troops for the purpose of extricating Haslet from the enemy's grasp. With the same intention, Webb's levies were placed behind a fence near the foot of the hill, not far from Haslet's left. Very soon afterward the Delawareans were attacked by the enemy's chasseurs and light infantry, and by a troop of dragoons, which they repulsed twice. By this time the main body of the horsemen having pursued the fugitive levies and militia over the hill, was returning and preparing for a charge. Seeing this, the Delawareans retired. Their retreat to the bridge along the Dobbs Ferry road was covered by the New Yorkers, Marylanders, and Connecticut levies, who themselves withdrew immediately afterward. At the foot of the hill, all that remained of the five fighting regiments, formed and marched into camp in good order.

Webb's regiment was the last that remained upon the

field of battle. "It had the honor," writes General Hull in his autobiography, "to receive the particular thanks of Washington for its bravery and orderly retreat."

When Washington saw the danger in which the troops upon Chatterton Hill were placed, he sent General Putnam with Beall's brigade of Marylanders to their support. When Putnam arrived near the bridge, he found it entirely too late to regain a post from which a superior force had already driven the Americans. He therefore marched some distance southerly, into the plain, and took a position, with the Bronx upon his right. Here he halted for a while, making a timely diversion in favor of McDougall, while the latter was retiring to the American lines.

The action at Chatterton Hill was followed by some skirmishes between Putnam's followers and part of the enemy's light troops. Before all these had ceased, it was three o'clock in the afternoon. The British commander determined to bivouack in the position in which he then was, with the intention of resuming the offensive upon the morrow. For this purpose the grenadiers of Donop were ordered forward to the northern extremity of the hill, where they formed, with Leslie's brigade in their rear upon the right, and two Hessian brigades, also behind upon their left. In this situation the Bronx was between them and the American right. The road leading to Tarrytown passed along their front and left. The right, and centre of the main body of the royal army did not change their ground in front of Washington's lines. In this position the enemy's troops lay upon their arms that night; and they continued with very little alteration, to encamp in the same attitude, for several days subsequently.

The loss of the enemy during this action in killed and wounded was afterward acknowledged by them, to have been nearly three hundred. That of the Americans, which fell principally upon the New York and Maryland troops, was probably about the same. The Hessian and British officers killed, consisted of Lieutenant-colonel Carr, two captains and two subalterns. Of their officers, twelve, including a

Lieutenant-colonel, were wounded. The Americans had four or five captains and lieutenants killed. Their wounded officers consisted of Lieutenant-colonel Smallwood and about ten or twelve others. Four of their officers and thirty-five privates were taken prisoners.

Of the gallant spirits who combated on Chatterton Hill, three of the most conspicuous were destined to a brief existence. Rahl and Haslet fell two months subsequently; the one at Trenton, the other at Princeton. One year afterward, at Red Bank Donop was mortally wounded and died prematurely; lamenting with his last breath, his own ambition and the avarice of his sovereign.

The approach of war was perceived by the inhabitants of the village and neighborhood of Whiteplains and a day or two before the battle, they, for the most part, removed in haste. Some, however, ventured to remain. At the commencement of the cannonade, Michael Chatterton, who lived at the foot of the hill, conducted his whole family to the cellar of the house, where they continued in safety until the termination of the action.

The night after the battle was spent by the American Commander in strengthening his position, upon the centre and right. Additional redoubts were formed. Most of the neighboring trees were felled. Some of these were set in front for abatis. Others, having the extremities of their limbs cut and pointed, were placed across the breastworks for the purpose of fraising them. On the morning of the 29th, the American fortifications scowled upon General Howe with an aspect so threatening that he deferred his intended attack, and ordered the Fourth brigade, left with Lord Piercy near Harlem, and part of the Sixth brigade, to join the army forthwith. In the meanwhile his forces upon the hill were busy in constructing redoubts, which were intended to operate against Washington's right and centre.

The expected reinforcements reached the British camp in the afternoon of the 30th. Dispositions were thereupon made for an assault upon the American camp on the morning of the last day of October; but toward nightfall, a cold and heavy

rain storm set in, which continued until the middle of the next day. During the whole of this night, which the survivors afterward described as the most miserable of their lives, the Americans, expecting an attack, were either on the alert under arms, or working uncovered in their trenches. They were engaged in different places, at this time, in the construction of redoubts, lines and abatis, both for the protection of the position they were then in, and for the formation of a new one in their rear. At two o'clock in the afternoon of the next day, it cleared off and the weather became fine; but the ground, wet and slippery, was considered by the British commander unfit for rapid movement. The assault in consequence was once more postponed until the following morning.

Washington, from the first, had determined to fall back upon stronger ground. After the battle, he determined upon another position and made the utmost exertion for the immediate removal of his hospital, baggage and stores, within the newly selected lines. These operations were not yet entirely completed. But perceiving Howe's great anxiety for a general action, which the American Commander was desirous for many reasons to avoid, the latter determined to get into his new position forthwith. Accordingly, during the night of the last day of October, the Americans evacuated their works at Whiteplains, setting fire to several barns and to one or two dwelling houses containing forage and stores that could not be removed. They entered upon the new ground by a backward wheel. The extreme left near Horton's Mill, remained where it had been, and formed the pivot upon which the whole army moved; while the extreme right retrograded a distance of about two miles. The lines, as now formed, ran nearly east and west. They passed from Horton's across Hatfield's, Foster's and Fisher's heights, to Mount Misery and Miller's Hill. Along these grounds, naturally very strong, the Americans had already commenced throwing up earthworks, for the purpose of giving additional security to the new encampment. The prosecution of this undertaking was continued for several days subsequently.

On the morning of the 1st of November, the King's forces were at last ready for the assault. Great was their surprise on beholding the exploits of a single night. Mortified to find his antagonist in a new and apparently strong attitude, when all the preparations to crush him were complete, General Howe decided at once to make a careful examination of the new position by a grand reconnoissance, for the purpose of finding some weak point that might justify an immediate attack. The right and centre of the British army got under arms in haste and took possession of the grounds from which Washington's troops had retired. A strong force of cavalry and artillery, supported by several columns of infantry, then marched upon the American left, against which a furious cannonade was commenced. This was answered with spirit and effect by the field-pieces of Captain Bryant and Lieutenant Jackson. The British artillery-men were several times thrown into confusion. Their loss is not known, but that of their adversaries was trifling; consisting only of one man killed and two or three wounded; all of them belonging to the New York troops under General George Clinton. Howe finding that no impression could be made upon this part of the American lines, ordered his artillery to be drawn back, and making a detour, came down upon the right, toward Miller's Hill where Colonel Glover commanded. This active and vigilant officer had with him some field-pieces, which he carefully concealed from sight. They consisted of a twenty-four, a six, and a three pounder, of brass; and three iron twelve pounders. The enemy's forces, with cavalry and artillery in front, approached in four columns. When about three quarter's of a mile from Miller's Hill, they wheeled to the left, crossed the Bronx, and advanced northwesterly, for the purpose of taking possession of Travis' Hill. This was an eminence opposite Colonel Glover's position which it commanded. When they were preparing to ascend the hill, Colonel Glover unmasked his battery and surprised his adversaries by an animated fire, which at first threw them into confusion. They ascended the hill, however, with a party of dragoons and a field-piece; which latter they hastily discharged four times

and then retreated. No loss was sustained upon this occasion by Glover's men. A Hessian cannonier and an artillery horse were found dead upon Travis' Hill, but what other loss the enemy met with, if any, remains unknown. In the afternoon the British forces withdrew to their former encampment.

General Howe perceiving that Washington meant to avoid an engagement, and knowing that any attempt to force his lines would be attended with great loss of life and uncertain results, determined after the reconnoissance of the 1st of November, to close his campaign upon another theatre. He accordingly made no other movement against the Americans while he remained at Whiteplains. "The two armies," says General Heath in his memoirs, "lay looking at each other, and within long cannon-shot. In the night time, the British lighted up a vast number of fires, the weather growing pretty cold. These fires, some on the level ground, some at the foot of the hill, and at all distances to their brows, some of which were lofty, seemed to the eye to mix with the stars, and to be of different magnitudes. The American side, doubtless, exhibited to them a similar appearance."

Washington now, with his utmost energy, proceeded to fortify the hills along the summit, of his new position. To facilitate the speedy completion of their field-works, a novel element in their construction, in the shape of cornstalks, was upon this occasion first introduced to notice by General Heath and was subsequently much used during the continuance of the campaign in Westchester. The following is the account given by this officer, of the first experiment made with this new material in fortification. "On this day (November 1st) our general," that is to say, Heath himself, "ordered three redoubts, with a line in front, to be thrown up on the summit of his post, so constructed that the whole of them could make a defence, and support each other at the same time, if attacked. These, to the enemy, in whose view they fully were, must have appeared very formidable, although they were designed principally for defence against small arms; and perhaps works were never raised quicker. These were the stalks of a large cornfield at the spot. The

pulling these up in hills, took up a large lump of earth with each. The roots of the stalks and earth on them, placed in the face of the works, answered the purpose of sods, or fascines. The tops being placed inwards, as the loose earth was thrown upon them, became as so many ties to the work, which was carried up with a dispatch scarcely conceivable."

The quiet that for three days had reigned in the hostile armies, was put an end to on the night of the 4th, by a busy hum which proceeded from the enemy's camp, and increased with the advance of daylight, when the rumbling of artillery-carriages and baggage-wagons, plainly indicated some great movement on the part of the British commander. The morning of the 5th of November at last came, but revealed nothing to the sight, for a dense fog hid every object from view and rendered the noisy demonstrations of Sir William Howe's army more mysterious than ever. Reconnoitring parties sent out from the left of the American lines by Generals George Clinton and Scott, after a while, ascertained that the enemy had withdrawn their advance guards and broken up their nearest encampment. Apprehensive of an attack, Washington placed all his men under arms. It was supposed by many that the British army was moving in a westerly direction, but conjectures were various, and for some hours all was suspense and anxiety. At length about two o'clock in the afternoon the fog cleared away, when it was found that the royal forces were retiring toward the North River, by the Dobbs Ferry road; their retreat being covered by strong detachments, which were drawn up on Chatterton Hill and the adjacent heights. Colonel Malcolm immediately sent fifty men from his regiment, to take possession of the Court House, and ordered a company of rangers under his command, to reconnoitre toward the east and south.

None of Washington's officers probably felt so much relieved by the withdrawal of the enemy as the worthy and patriotic Malcolm, who for eight days had maintained a perilous position on Merritt's Hill, within musket shot of one of the British advanced posts, and a mile distant from the American lines. In a letter written by him during this same

afternoon to John McKesson he says: "It is now past three o'clock. The enemy are moved off to our right, i.e. to the heights northwest of the Court House. I can make no farther discoveries in this quarter, but that I am delivered from troublesome neighbours, and have a prospect of sleep tonight."

After the nightfall of this day, Major Austin of Massachusetts, who was posted on the American left, was sent out with a scouting party. He returned about midnight, "heated with liquor" as was generally said, and ordered his men to set fire to most of the buildings in the lower part of the village. The Court House, Presbyterian Church, and six or seven dwelling houses were consequently burnt to the ground. In his general orders of the ensuing day, Washington denounced condign punishment against the authors of this mischief.

Major Austin was immediately brought to trial before a Court Martial which sentenced him to be reprimanded, but General Lee ordered a new Court Martial "with a charge of wanton, cruel and barbarous treatment of helpless women and children, not only unworthy the character of an officer, but of a human creature." On this second trial it appeared, that one of the houses burnt was filled with women and children, who had returned from the place of refuge they had sought, on the approach of the British army; that the females were insulted with abusive language, and threatened with death by Austin and his party, who would not suffer the mother to dress her children but drove them out of doors naked. Austin acknowledged that he had no orders to burn the houses. The following was the decision of the Court Martial, i.e.: "The Court having considered the case of the prisoner, Major Austin, are of opinion that he is guilty of a breach of the twenty-first article in the fourteenth section of the rules for the government of the Forces of the United States of America, and therefore sentence him to be discharged from the service."

Until the French government furnished Congress with muskets, the American troops, and the militia especially, were badly armed. They carried firelocks of various calibre

and were often without bayonets. So great was the deficiency of these latter weapons, that some of the men were furnished with pikes hastily and roughly manufactured, for the purpose of resisting the British cavalry. The want of bayonets was one reason why upon Chatterton Hill, the levies and militia fled before the Seventeenth light dragoons.

Washington seems to have had no mounted force at Whiteplains with the exception of a small corps of light dragoons. These horsemen were from Connecticut, and conducted themselves so well, that they drew from the Commander-in-chief an unqualified tribute of praise in the general orders for the 1st of November. "A relief," say the orders, "having come from the Light Horse under Major Backus, that corps is now dismissed, with the General's hearty thanks for their faithful services, and the cheerfulness and alacrity they have shown upon all occasions."

General Washington's strategy in Westchester during the campaign of 1776 has generally been highly estimated by military writers. Nearly destitute of cavalry, he made the most skilful use of the infantry and artillery under his command; which in the aggregate never exceeded eighteen or nineteen thousand men, in general badly equipped. To a very great extent, they consisted of peaceable husbandmen, fresh from their firesides, and never before in the presence of an enemy. The British army on the other hand, although numerically smaller, was beyond all comparison the more effective. It consisted of at least fourteen thousand men, in the highest state of health, discipline and equipment; including two regiments of light dragoons. Where he could, the American commander-in-chief placed his irregulars under cover of intrenchments; in which position he knew they would behave well. At Chatterton Hill, however, most of them remained firm under a long continued cannonade, although the second shot struck down one of their number, and their subsequent losses were serious. At a later hour of the day, it is true, five or six regiments fled before the dragoons. Still, toward the close of the battle, Webb's levies met, and for some time withstood in the field, the royal infantry and

cavalry; exhibiting an intrepidity equal to that of the regular troops with which they were associated.

Before he landed in Westchester, General Howe's tardiness of movement had become manifest. Washington ever afterward seems to have counted upon it in his operations. It has generally been the opinion of military men, that had the American army, on the 28th day of October, been promptly attacked upon the right and centre, it would have been overthrown. All was then confusion and alarm, in Washington's camp. The lapse of a single night took from the British commander his golden opportunity. His hesitation and timidity at Whiteplains have generally been accounted for, by his unwillingness to attack American troops, when covered by any kind of intrenchments. He commanded for the King at the battle of Bunker's Hill, and the dear-bought experience of that day is supposed to have influenced him throughout the rest of his military life.

Three days after the battle of Whiteplains, Captain Van Wyck, who commanded a company of rangers attached to General George Clinton's brigade, was unfortunately killed. He went out in the morning with about thirty men, to patrol upon the enemy's right. At a house in North Street, he fell in with a detachment of Rogers' rangers and instantly attacked them, although superior to him in numbers. Having discharged his musket, he was in the act of reloading. While so engaged, one of the King's soldiers shot him through the brain and he fell dead upon the ground. In a moment after, his death was avenged by his lieutenant, who killed the hostile ranger and brought off the captain's body, which was buried with the honors of war.

Generally speaking, the people of Westchester were, at this time, averse to separation from Great Britain. The royal officers, in consequence, earnestly endeavored to prevent their soldiers from plundering. Notwithstanding these efforts, the farmers suffered much; chiefly in the loss of provisions and cattle, and in the destruction of their fences. During the campaign of 1776, the inhabitants sustained greater injury from the foreign soldiers than from the British. The Hessians,

ignorant of the country and of the causes of the war, were disposed to treat with military rigor, all whom they considered rebels. Even at his own table at Whiteplains, General de Heister is said to have threatened with personal violence an American officer who had been taken prisoner, because he refused to drink the King's health.

A widow named Woodward, with a numerous family, lived near the village of Whiteplains, in a sequestered spot. She was visited one night by a party of Hessian soldiers, who demanded something to eat. The poor woman, alarmed for the safety of herself and her children, hastened to propitiate the intruders. She placed before them the best cheer her house afforded, that is to say, plenty of cider and pumpkin pies, a large batch of which latter she had just withdrawn from the oven. After satisfying their hunger, the ungrateful guests disposed of the remaining pies by cutting them into small pieces and throwing them, so as to stick fast against the walls and ceiling of the room.

Previously to the war of independence, feats of personal prowess, dexterity, and strength were customary and popular with the inhabitants of Westchester. Among the most celebrated champions of his day, both as a wrestler and fighter, was a young man of Whiteplains, named Gilbert Hatfield, whose father, on the near approach of the enemy, had retired to a place of safety, leaving his house and farm, in charge of this, his eldest son. A day or two after the battle, young Hatfield was suddenly set upon, in a lonely place, by four Hessian soldiers. These were privates, who had wandered from their camp unarmed for the purpose of plundering. Two of the robbers laid hold of the young man, demanding his money. They soon discovered the magnitude of their mistake. In an instant he tripped up both his assailants, knocked down the other two, drew the four together, and beat them to his heart's content. He immediately reported this affair to the nearest Hessian commander, who expressed much concern at the occurrence, and offered to make a proper example of the soldiers; but was soon convinced by his informant, that the offenders had been already sufficiently punished.

Before the battle, General Charles Lee reached Whiteplains with the van of his division, and established his quarters about two miles above the village. The house selected for his temporary residence stood hard by the road, and was owned and occupied by the widow Annetjie Miller. Subsequently his dinner happened to be served up at a moment when General Washington and his staff halted at the door, on their return to camp from a reconnoissance. An invitation to alight and partake of refreshment was of course extended to the Commander-in-chief and his officers, which they gladly accepted; approaching the table with appetites sharpened by a long ride over the hills. When they had finished their repast, scarcely anything remained for their host. Lee was soured by the loss of his dinner and the diminution of his wine. As soon as his guests had departed, he said to his aides "You must look me out another place, for if I remain here, Washington and his hungry followers will eat me up." Lee made upon this occasion, an unsatisfactory dinner. Fearful of another visit at mealtime, he ordered a servant, in case the Commander-in-chief with his suite should pass Mrs. Miller's again, to write in large letters, with chalk, upon the outward door, the words "No victuals dressed here to today." It turned out that Lee's apprehensions were well founded. Washington and his officers upon a subsequent morning, passed by, and the inscription was placed upon the door. When in the afternoon, on their return, the same company approached Mrs. Miller's house, they read the chalk advertisement, broke out into a hearty laugh at this sample of uncourtliness in a man whose eccentricities were known to all, and then pushed home, in great glee, for their own tables.

The day before the battle, by General Lee's advice, Mrs. Miller removed a short distance to the interior, taking with her, her family, and some necessary furniture. She left for the use of her military guest, while she herself should be absent, her best bed; the linen checked curtains of which were wholly made by her daughter Sarah, afterward Mrs. Mott, and mother-in-law to a well known merchant of New

York, the late John Franklin. These hangings were the handsomest specimens of domestic manufacture that the neighborhood afforded. Both mother and daughter were proportionally proud of them. Mrs. Miller returned to her domicile on the next day after the enemy retired from Whiteplains, and among many missing articles, were the curtains in question. They no longer hung over the bed to which they belonged. The daughter, alarmed for their safety, long searched the house in vain. At length, in some remote chamber, she found a tailor, shears in hand, upon the floor, in the very act of cutting up her handywork in order to form it into the lining of a military cloak he was about making for General Lee. The tailor refused to give up so important a part of his material, and the general himself on being appealed to, showed at first a strong inclination to hold on. However, after a while, but with a bad grace, he resigned the curtains into the hands of their fair manufacturess.

The late General Philip Van Courtland used to tell a story of General Lee, which exhibited at the same time, the peculiar humor of the man, and the poverty of his wardrobe. "It was at this time," said Van Courtland, "currently reported and believed in the American camp, that Lee's stock of shirts was reduced to three, and that these were in a state of such dilapidation, that he himself bestowed upon them the appropriate names of Tag, Rag and Bobtail. Having been invited to dine at headquarters, the following dialogue was said to have occurred between him and his valet."

"John !"

"Sir !"

"I am going to dine today with General Washington and must have a clean shirt. Fetch me Tag."

"You have got Tag on, Sir."

"Let me have Rag, then."

"Rag is in the wash, Sir."

"Well then,—Bring along Bobtail !"

CHAPTER III

THE WESTCHESTER GUIDES IN THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION

"MANY brave men," says an ancient writer, "lived before the days of Agamemnon, but unhonored by the bard and disregarded by the historian, their names have perished and their deeds are unknown." This observation if applied now to the times of the Revolution, would accord with truth as exactly as it did when first uttered with respect to the ages of the early world. It seems to be among the hard conditions of our fate that those who play subordinate parts in the drama of life, however ably they may act, should soon be consigned to oblivion; that the many cannot be long remembered; and that in war especially, although honors and triumphs reward the few who become conspicuous in command, the great multitude of the deserving are left to seek their recompense in the cold satisfaction of having discharged their duty. In our particular commonwealth, those who during the great contest did the state good service, were numerous, but for the most part, their names have not been recorded, and their actions lost in the passing crowd of events, have almost disappeared. I have never felt more saddened at this injustice of fame, than when contemplating the merits of a class of men, who during the war of American Independence, steadily upheld "the good cause," acting sometimes as guides to the Continental and combined armies while operating in the adjacent county of Westchester, and sometimes as volunteers, but who in our days are scarcely remembered.

In the latter part of 1775, and the beginning of the following year, the sons of such of the Westchester farmers as earnestly favored the proceedings of the Continental Congress, formed themselves into voluntary companies of horse and

foot, generally choosing their own officers. Travels connected with business and excursions of pleasure, had given then an accurate knowledge of the roads that traversed their native district, and frequent hunting parties, to which they were much accustomed, had made them acquainted with the hills, passes, and more unfrequented localities. In the early operations of the American forces in Westchester, when military conductors became necessary, they were sought for among the farmers of Westchester. The most intelligent were selected for the purpose and formed into a body called the "Westchester Guides." The greater part of them continued in the public service while the war lasted. When not acting as guides, they were employed as superintendents of forage or in some other capacity. In dangerous excursions they were always ready to take the lead, being admirably adapted for conducting partisan movements by enterprise, courage, skill in the use of their weapons, sound judgment, and topographical knowledge of the country.

In the attacks upon the British outposts particularly during the last years of the war, the American commanders were very often governed in their proceedings by the suggestions that came from these native strategists, and when in danger of capture, as the upper forces often were when down in small parties, from that rapidity of pursuit which the enemy were always enabled to make use of, in consequence of the concentration of their light troops along Harlem River, from Morrisiana to Kingsbridge, it was not unusual for someone of the guides to take upon himself the entire direction of the retiring detachment, during the continuance of its retreat. Such was the confidence reposed in them, by those who best knew their abilities.

With the hope of saving from total oblivion the names of those brave and patriotic men, I beg to place them before the Society, selecting for brief commentary, the three who were most conspicuous.

The principal Westchester Guides, were the brothers Isaac and Cornelius Oakley of Whiteplains, and their cousin James Oakley of the Borough Town of Westchester; the three

brothers John, Abraham and Isaac Odell of Greenburgh; Isaac, or Uk Odell and Martin Post of Yonkers; the brothers Abraham and Michael Dyckman of Kingsbridge; the brothers John and Peter Pine, from the country along the Croton, Samuel Youngs and John McChain of the manor of Philipsborough, Isaac Webbers of North Castle, David Hunt of Westchester, William Greene of the Lower Yonkers, and William N. Dyckman. To these names may be added Andrew Corsa of Fordham (who is yet living) but who in consequence of his youth, only acted upon two or three important occasions, during the latter years of the war.

The three, of whose numerous exploits I propose to describe a few, and of whose lives and characters, I shall give a very concise sketch, are Cornelius Oakley of Whiteplains, John Odell of Greenburgh and Abraham Dyckman of Kingsbridge.

The ancestors of the first of these were among the early settlers of the Borough Town of Westchester. Cornelius Oakley was born on the 15th of January in the year 1757, at Whiteplains, to which place his father had removed two or three years previously. Some time in the spring of 1776, when it had become evident that a struggle with the forces of the mother-country was at hand, he and his brother Isaac enrolled themselves at Whiteplains, in a volunteer company composed of ardent young whigs of their own age, belonging to that part of the Country. They took this measure without the knowledge of their father, who had attached himself to the Society of Quakers, and consequently heard of it with extreme disapprobation. In obedience to his positive commands, they withdrew unwillingly from their engagement, and took but little part in the first campaign.

John Odell was born near Croton River upon the Manor of Courtland, on the 25th of October 1756. His paternal ancestor William Odell emigrated from England along with some of the early colonists of Rye, where he at first settled, but subsequently, about the year 1680, removed to the Manor of Fordham, and married a daughter of one of the Dutch inhabitants. Similar alliances were sought by most of his children and descendants, by which means, when our guide's father settled,

first on the banks of the Croton and afterwards near Dobb's Ferry in Greenburgh, about the middle of the eighteenth century, both he and his whole family spoke the language of Holland, and in manners were Dutch rather than English. From the commencement of the revolutionary troubles, in common with his father and near relatives, Odell opposed the coercive measures of the British ministry, and in June 1776, along with two of his brothers, joined a large volunteer company of light infantry under the command of Stephen Oakley. This corps, to which the brothers Abraham and Michael Dyckman also belonged took part subsequently in the battle of Long Island.

Abraham Dyckman was born at Kingsbridge upon the island side of Spyt den duivel Creek, on the 25 of August 1754. His paternal ancestors were among the early colonists of New Netherland and at one time owned nearly the whole extremity of New York Island, north of Fort Washington. From the time of their first migration from Holland, their political propensities were strongly republican, and during the agitations that characterized the days of Leisler, they were his devoted friends, adhering to him after his fall with the same steadiness with which they had supported him while in power. It is a tradition in the family that a few days before the execution of the unfortunate Lieutenant-Governor, their ancestor, Jacob Dyckman, then a child, accompanied his father, whose baptismal name he bore, to the city prison, where they saw the unhappy leader of faction, then under sentence of death. Leisler took the child in his arms, and on learning his name exclaimed: "In that case we have three Jacobs here." He then put his hand upon the boy's head and added: "God bless you Jacob! May you live long and be a good and prosperous man."

When the British forces in the autumn of 1776 took possession of New York, the determined Whigs who stood committed to the cause of independence, went for the most part into voluntary exile, seeking new homes in the counties bordering upon the Hudson. Among these temporary emigrants were the Dyckmans of Kingsbridge, and the Odells of Green-

burgh most of whom, while the war continued lived upon Courtland's Manor above the Croton.

So far as can at this day be ascertained, the attempt made in January 1777, to reduce Fort Independence, near Kingsbridge, was the earliest occasion that called any of the "Guides of Westchester," (afterwards so celebrated) into the public service. As the time for putting his forces in motion drew nigh, General Heath applied to the Committee of Safety, for some persons minutely acquainted with the country around Kingsbridge, and with the various roads leading to New York, who might both act as guides and assist him in the capacity of aides, and that body appointed Cornelius Oakley, Isaac Oakley, John Pine and David Hunt to accompany the division under General Scott, and John Odell and the two Dyckmans, Abraham and Michael, to go down with the column under General Lincoln. The American Army was at this time moved upon Fort Independence with great skill by different routes, and in three distinct columns, and during the whole investment that ensued, the Guides were constantly engaged in procuring quarters and forage for the troops, in keeping up intercourse between the various divisions and regiments, and in communicating the orders of the different officers, and the value of their services was acknowledged in public thanks by the commanding general.

During part of the summer and autumn of 1778, the main body of the American forces under General Washington, was encamped at Whiteplains with a strong advanced corps posted near Tuckahoe, a few miles in front under General Scott, while still farther below, this latter officer stationed a picket guard of about one hundred and fifty riflemen under Colonel Gist, which lay on the heights, a little south of the Episcopalian parsonage then occupied by the widow Babcock. John Odell was Gist's chief guide, and as respects most of his operations, was also his confidential adviser. Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe at that time in command of the British light troops about Kingsbridge and Fordham, marched with his whole force before daybreak, on the morning of the 16th of September upon the camp of the American colonel,

for the purpose of surrounding and taking his detachment by surprise. Lieutenant-colonel Emmerich conducted the advance so adroitly, that the infantry of his corps and that of the Queen's rangers passed between two pickets of riflemen and gained the heights in rear of the American camp undiscovered. Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton in the meantime with the whole of his cavalry, had taken possession of Valentine's Hill on the East, while Major Prueschenck and Captain Wreden with strong detachments of the yagers were hastening to stations where they might cut off the retreat of the Americans, towards the south or west.

It was now a little before six o'clock in the morning. The Continental detachment was almost encircled by an overwhelming force, and nothing appeared wanting to render escape impossible but a few moments more of time, in order that Prueschenck and Wreden might gain their proper positions. The destruction of Gist's corps seemed inevitable, but in the very hour of fate, fortune first, and then his guide, stepped forward for his preservation. One of his officers, Captain Smith, had been sent on business the day before to head-quarters and was at this moment returning on horseback from Whiteplains to camp, along the Sawmill river road. As he passed the Episcopalian parsonage, Madame Babcock was standing on the porch and waved her handkerchief for him to approach, intending to warn him of the danger ahead; but Smith was in haste, and mistaking her signal, returned it as a morning salutation, and pushing forward entered an ambuscade carefully prepared by Emmerich. Suddenly soldiers rose up from behind the fences, an officer called upon him to surrender, and the American captain found himself almost surrounded. With great decision he wheeled about, threw himself flat upon the horse's shoulders, and spurring him to his utmost speed, rode safely through a volley of musketry and rifle-balls and escaped. Simcoe now mounted rapidly up the steeps toward Colonel Gist, but was mortified to find that his quarry had escaped, and that all he had gained was the possession of an empty camp. The truth is, however, that the American colonel was completely surprized,

and when the first alarm was given by the firing of Emmerich's detachment, Gist's men were panic struck and preparing for surrender. Some of them in despair went so far as to throw away their rifles, but Odell addressed them, gave them assurances that if they would resume their arms and follow him, he would take them safely off, and with great presence of mind proceeded to perform his promise. He led them through thickets to the most inaccessible parts of the Sawmill river which he forded at their head where the water was breast high, and gaining the difficult ridge, at that time covered with wood, which runs along the Hudson, conducted them, almost without loss, to General Scott's encampment.

In the attack upon the refugee settlement situate in Morrisania, on the east side of Mill-brook, made by Lieutenant Colonel Hull, supported by General Parsons on the morning of the 22nd January 1781, Cornelius Oakley, accompanied by the principal guides, commanded a select body of about twenty-five volunteer horsemen. When Hull's party approached the brook, it was found swollen to such a height by a heavy rain of the day before, and so filled with broken ice, that the passage was extremely difficult, and could only be effected by mounting infantry behind cavalry. This required time, and the noise unavoidably occasioned by fording the stream, was heard by the enemy who immediately fired an alarm. Day was beginning to dawn when the American detachment came to the principal refugee village, where the enemy though surprised, were found standing to their arms and preparing for defense. Without giving them time to recover from their confusion, Hull gave orders for Captain Honeywell to prepare the cavalry for a charge, while the infantry would advance to their support. Oakley overheard, and saw the necessity for prompt action. At the head of his followers, he led the onset instantly against the refugees dashing into their ranks while they were in the act of forming, and by breaking and pursuing them in various directions, insured the success of an enterprize, which, but for his quick decision and intrepidity, might have been doubtful.

In the summer of 1781, after the Allied forces had been encamped upon the heights of Greenburgh, between Whiteplains and the Hudson, about two weeks, Washington and Rochambeau prepared for a formidable movement, with a select portion of their army, toward the lines of the enemy. Preparatory to this operation, Count Mathieu Dumas and the two brothers Berthier, with several other young officers attached to the French staff, who had for some days been zealously engaged in exploring the ground and roads, and in sketching maps of the country, between the allied Camp and Kingsbridge, were ordered by the French commander to set out before day-light, and to push their examinations till they came within sight of the enemy's most advanced redoubts at the northern extremity of New York Island. To protect these youthful aspirants for martial honors, a strong detachment of the lancers of Lauzun was sent along, under Lieutenant Charles Jennings Kilmaine, a young Irishman in the French service, whose merits were just then becoming known, and who afterward became a general of division and enjoyed the reputation of being one of the best cavalry officers in Europe. The command of the whole party was bestowed upon Dumas. Cornelius Oakley was selected upon this occasion, to act as the principal guide, accompanied by his cousin James and by Andrew Corsa.

Near Milesquare, Kilmaine fell in with a patrol of refugees which he charged and dispersed. Further down, the reconnoitring party formed a junction with a select body of American light-infantry, who the same morning, had gone down to explore the ground on the right, and the two allied detachments then drove across Kingsbridge the troops that occupied the Hessian outpost; pursuing the fugitives, till they came within musket shot of Prince Charles' redoubt. This reconnoissance was the first occasion upon which Kilmaine particularly distinguished himself, and it established in favor of the elder Berthier, a reputation for intrepidity which led to his promotion. While at some distance from his comrades, the latter fell in with, and was attacked by one of Colonel James Delancey's corps of refugees. A fierce en-

counter hand to hand was maintained by Berthier with the aggressor who did not surrender until mortally wounded.

Five thousand troops of the two nations were now ordered to be held in readiness for marching below, at eight o'clock in the evening of Saturday, July the 21st, for the purpose of reconnoitring with precision the enemy's posts on the island, between Kingsbridge and Harlem, and of cutting off, if possible, such of the enemy's corps as might be found upon the main. At the hour appointed, the march commenced in four columns, and on different roads. The right American column consisted of the Connecticut troops, twenty-five of Sheldon's light dragoons and two field pieces under Major General Parsons, on the North River road. Two continental detachments under Major Generals Lincoln and Howe, together with the corps of sappers and miners and four field pieces formed the next column, on the Sawmill river road. The right column of the French, on the left of the Americans, consisted of the Brigade of Bourbonnais, with the battalion of grenadiers and chasseurs, two field pieces, and two twelve pounders, and moved by the Sprain road; while their left column, composed of the legion of Lauzun, one battalion of grenadiers and chasseurs, the regiment of Soissonnais, two field pieces and two howitzers, marched on the Tuckahoe road. General Waterbury with the militia and state troops of Connecticut moved down by the Boston and New York post road. The utmost pains were taken by the commander in chief to prevent any intelligence of these movements from getting to the enemy. Scammell's light infantry and various companies of rangers advanced through the fields, ambuscaded the roads, apprehended all persons travelling toward Kingsbridge or Morrisania and stopped effectually all communication with the lower towns of the county. This occasion called for the services of all the acting guides. John Odell and the two Dyckmans were accordingly the chief guides for the American columns, while Cornelius Oakley conducted the French troops under Rochambeau and Chastellux, assisted by Isaac and James Oakley, Isaac Webbers and others.

At Valentine's Hill the left column of the American troops formed a junction with the two French divisions, and the united forces arrived before Kingsbridge about daylight. Here they found General Parsons, who had arrived on the ground a short time previously. The whole army then formed on the heights back of Fort Independence, and between there and Fordham Hamlet, to the great surprise of the enemy, who appeared to have been without the least intelligence of the hostile approach until the combined forces were ready to deploy.

The commander-in-chief, in company with General Rochambeau and the engineers, thereupon began to reconnoitre the enemy's position and works, first from Tippett's Hill opposite to their left, and then from Kingsbridge-Hill by Dyckman's bridge. After a short survey the two generals and their retinue galloped forward rapidly to Fordham Hamlet, where they halted.

It was on the morning of Sunday, July the 22nd, and soon after sunrise, when Cornelius Oakley and Isaac Webbers, rode to the house of Captain Isaac Corsa, who lived near where the Roman Catholic College of St. John now stands, and asked to see his son Andrew, then a youth of about eighteen or nineteen, who is still alive, and a resident at Fordham. He had not yet risen, and the strangers who demanded the interview were conducted to his bedroom. Oakley then informed him that agreeably to his promise, General Washington required his services forthwith as a guide, while the combined army remained below. This young man whose quick parts, intelligence, and accurate knowledge of the roads and passes of Morrisania and Fordham had recommended him to the elder guides, soon dressed, and then followed his visitors; who took him in front of a gateway which had lately led to Union Hill, the Rev. Doctor Powell's residence, at that time occupied by the widow of Peter De-Lancey, the grandmother of Mrs. Powell. Here he found a splendid array of officers in full military dress, mounted, and awaiting his arrival. They sat on horseback, on the northerly side of the road, abreast of each other, and facing the highway. Besides the

American generals and their aides, the group comprised Rochambeau, Chastellux, the Duke de Lauzun, and the numerous officers attached to the French staff. Washington spoke kindly to the young man and ordered a good horse to be furnished for his use. The guides inquired if there were any of the refugee corps in the neighbourhood whom they might capture. Young Corsa told them there were two, of very notorious character, who might be found on the road they were about to pursue toward Westfarms, one of whom, Sergeant Hilliard belonged to Emmerich's dragoons, and that the other was one James Travis; but proceeded then to qualify his information with these words:

"I saw them both last night, between here and Westfarms, at the house where Hilliard lives when not on duty. Push on quickly and you may secure them. But take care that Hilliard doesn't see you before you lay your hands on him, for if he once gets into the saddle you'll never catch him in the world. He is the most determined rider I have ever seen, and backs the fleetest horse that's known about here."

Webbers then asked with earnestness, if this last were the famous "yellow boy with a black streak along his back," that belonged to someone in Captain Ogden's troop, and on being assured that it was the same, both he and the other guides became equally anxious to possess themselves of the celebrated steed and to secure his rider. One and all, they now solicited the allied commanders for leave to go on in advance of the army and make the attempt. Permission was granted, whereupon they mounted in haste and pricked forward, young Corsa taking the lead in order to show them the house. The refugees however, were upon their guard, notwithstanding all the circumspection and speed that had been made use of by their adversaries; both of them being found mounted, as the guides came up. Travis fled at first sight of the pursuers, but Sergeant Hilliard felt such confidence in the superior powers of his courser, that he allowed them to approach within pistol shot before he moved. One of the guides then called out that they had something of

importance to communicate to him, upon which he flourished a military salute, bade them good morning, and displayed immediately to its full extent the speed of his horse. A hot pursuit instantly followed, across the fields of Fordham and Morrisania, and more appropriate grounds than these at that time were for such a chase, are rarely witnessed, divested by war, as this region had long been, of barriers and fences. Travis was soon overtaken and secured, but Sergeant Hilliard was not long in making good the prophecy of young Corsa, for he had been followed but little more than a mile before he disappeared entirely.

When the pursuers, whose horses were much blown, regained the road they had left, they found the reconnoitring army in full motion toward Westfarms, and were ordered to their proper places in the van. According to the order of march, the guides with a detachment of light cavalry led the way, accompanied by some young officers of the staff, both American and French. Next came the generals themselves with their aides and retinue, and then, after a considerable interval, followed the main body of the army. The expedition moved forward slowly and silently, without beat of drum or sound of trumpet. The horsemen scarcely ever broke from a walk. In this manner the army marched along the Fordham road, straight to the west bank of the Bronx, directly opposite to DeLancey's Mills, at Westfarms, and then continued its movement in a southerly direction immediately along the margin of the stream. After passing along the Bronx a mile or more, they left behind them the houses of Cornelius Leggett and Robert Hunt, the latter of which is yet standing: mansions memorable as having at different times been the headquarters of the tory leaders Colonel DeLancey and Major Barmore. A short distance further on, the guides turned to the left, toward Graham's Point, and soon reached a spot that commanded a full view of Long Island Sound. Here General Washington ordered a halt, and inquired the names of the islands that lay before them, particularly those of the Two Brothers. Retracing their steps about half a mile, they entered the old road leading

to Morrisania Ferry, which they followed for a while, and then moving through the fields on the left, entered Morrisania by its eastern borders. The refugee corps all this while, surprised and alarmed at the sudden appearance of the combined forces, were flying before them, and seeking safety at Harlem and Montressor's Island. When the allies came in sight of the enemy, on the high grounds about old Morrisania House, the residence of Col. Lewis Morris, the British Artillery opened upon them a tremendous fire from the fortifications at Montressor's Island and Snake Hill (now Mount Morris), from the batteries at Harlem, and from the ships of war at anchor in the river. Near Morrisania Mill the army halted for a few minutes, to give the commanding officers an opportunity of examining the opposite shores; while the vanguard consisting of Sheldon's light dragoons and some of the hussars and lancers of Lauzun, accompanied by the guides, and by most of the young French and American aides, galloped to the Ferry at Harlem River, and charged a troop of DeLancey's cavalry that lingered upon Westchester side. The refugee horsemen fired their carbines and pistols, as their antagonists came near, and then wheeled about to escape by swimming. The allied cavalry followed them closely and several combats took place in the water, in which one of the fugitives was killed, but the riderless steed escaped with his comrades, and gave evidence of good training, by taking his proper place in the troop, when the latter, after crossing the river, drew up and formed on the opposite bank. The horse of one of the French officers was about the same time either killed or disabled, upon which the rider dismounted, and with great coolness took off and secured upon his shoulders the saddle, bridle and holsters, and waded back to the shore. Having driven the refugees to the Island, the vanguard stopped for a short time behind the mansion of Colonel Lewis Morris, near the Ferry, where most of the guides and officers dismounted.

Here they found a refugee from the upper part of the county, named John Montross, who answered their inquiries with readiness and civility, and not being in uniform, passed for one of the neighboring farmers. Montross was observed to

be much struck by the beauty of a large black horse belonging to one of the French officers, who had left him in charge of a servant. Addressing himself to the groom, the refugee asked the animal's age and pedigree, examined his points, got the reins in his hand, and at length, while still engaged in conversation, vaulted into the saddle, and urging the courser to his utmost speed by kicking his flanks, was in a few minutes afterward in the act of fording Harlem River. The capture and escape would have been nearly simultaneous, but for a very unusual circumstance. When they came to where the water was deep, the horse refused to swim. While the enterprising robber was floundering in the creek, in fruitless efforts to impel his gallant looking prize within the British lines, the alarm was given to the allied horsemen, and eight or ten dragoons and guides rode into the river and discharged their pistols and carbines at the refugee. Montross now dismounted, but not to relinquish his prize. Holding on to the bridle and placing the horse between himself and his enemies, he ducked under water whenever they were about to fire. At length his situation attracted the attention of the refugee troops at Harlem who encouraged him by shouts and gestures, several of them musket in hand wading out to his relief, and firing upon the guides and dragoons, soon after which, one or two field pieces were brought down and planted opposite the ferry, which compelled the American and French advanced guard to withdraw. Montross who had constantly held on to his saddle prize by the bridle, now secured him, together with his trappings and his master's pistols, but the horse persisted to the last in refusing to swim, and the captor at length was compelled to take him to New York Island in a boat.

The combined forces then commenced their return march, passing west of Mill-Brook, through the fields of Morrisania and Fordham, and stopping from time to time as they moved along, to enable the generals and engineers to examine the grounds along Harlem River. At sundown they reached the heights near Fort Independence, where an encampment had been marked out for them, and there terminated the

operations that distinguished *the first day of the grand reconnoissance.*

Toward the end of February, 1782, Cornelius Oakley planned an attack upon the refugees of Morrisania, which was submitted to and approved of by Major Woodbridge of the Second Connecticut regiment, who then commanded upon the lines, and was carried into execution a few days afterward. Captain Israel Honeywell at the head of his company of Westchester light horse with volunteers and guides, amounting in the whole to nearly one hundred men, was ordered to strike at the refugees, in their settlement below the British redoubt No. 8, while Major Woodbridge himself with one hundred and fifty Continental infantry, would be ready to support the former in his operations.

The American detachment marched from near Pinesbridge about mid-day on the 3d of March. At Eastchester Major Woodbridge halted with his infantry for the purpose of taking a position by which he might cover Honeywell's retreat, while the latter pushed forward toward Morrisania, and passing down between the quarters occupied by the refugees and redoubt No. 8 turned the left flank of the former between daylight and sunrise, and suddenly entered the settlement of the royalists. Cornelius Oakley, seconded by Abraham Dyckman, led the attack, and charged home with loud huzzas, at the head of about twenty guides and mounted volunteers. The enemy, completely surprised, were dispersed, fled at the first onset in every direction, leaving six dead upon the spot and many wounded men whose sabre cuts were too severe to warrant a removal. Soon afterward, however, some of the refugees rallied, and availing themselves of positions which the American horsemen could not reach, harassed their assailants by an unremitted discharge of musketry, which occasioned the firing of alarm guns at redoubt No. 8, and at Fort George on New York Island. Capt. Honeywell now proceeded without delay to fall back upon Major Woodbridge. The prisoners consisted of a Lieutenant and twenty of DeLancey's men, and twenty-two dragoon horses also were captured, with their equipment and the arms of their

riders. Although the American forces retired with celerity, it was not long before Colonel DeLancey overtook them in Eastchester, at the head of his whole corps, and some Hessian riflemen from Kingsbridge under Captain Heltzheimer, but his infantry being extremely fatigued by a forced march of unusual rapidity, he halted for a while before leading them against the Americans.

At this moment the guide of Kingsbridge, who always courted the post of danger, the foremost of the van in pursuit, the hindmost of the rear in retreat, was riding side by side with his cousin the late William N. Dyckman of Macakassin, the last of all the party. Perceiving the refugees stationary, he wheeled about and advanced upon the pursuers, sword in hand, as his custom was, for the purpose of challenging some one of them to meet him in single combat. It happened unfortunately that a solitary rifleman had crept considerably ahead of the British party, concealing himself behind a stone wall, from which he took deliberate aim at the guide and fired with mournful effect. The distance from which the fatal shot came was very extraordinary, and Dyckman himself soon afterward said, that he did not suppose there existed a firelock that could carry a ball so far. After receiving the wound in his body he leaned on one side, which gave his horse an inclination in the same direction, and his cousin who was near by, cried out immediately: "Abraham! your horse is wounded." Dyckman, turning slowly about answered, but with a look and gesture which told his state, before he gave utterance to a word. "William," said the stricken soldier, laying his hand upon the wound: "I've got it now. But don't let me fall into the enemy's hands. I dread that." His two brothers Jacobus and Michael, who were a short distance off, were now called, and these, when they came up, took the reins of his bridle and rode briskly forward, while he with their aid supported himself by the horse's mane, until they passed the American detachment and reached a place of safety. Immediately afterward, he was conveyed to the neighborhood of Peekskill, where he died five days subsequently on the 9th of March, 1782, and was buried at Crompond.

The last partisan excursion of the Neutral Ground was made on the 24th, of January, 1783, by about fifty volunteer horsemen under the command of Captain Daniel Williams. John Odell and his two brothers, William N. Dyckman, Martin Post and John McChain were engaged in this enterprise, the principal object of which, was to make prisoner of Colonel James DeLancey, who entirely off his guard lay at Westfarms, in fancied security, busily engaged in preparations to meet the banishment to which he had been doomed by the confiscation and outlawry Act of the Legislature of his parent state. The great outlaw of Westchester however escaped, notwithstanding every precaution was taken by Captain Williams, when he advanced about midnight upon DeLancey's House, at Westfarms and the followers of the former thereupon sought solace for the disappointment in an appropriation of spoils, justified alike by the rules of war, and by seven years' usage upon the lines, consisting principally of household valuables, arms, and horses.

As the American volunteers on their return, approached the Manor of Cortland, such of them as came from its eastern parts, being anxious to regain their homes by the shortest route, refused to cross the Croton River, and it was therefore proposed and agreed to, by acclamation, that they should go to Orser's house, on the banks of the North River, where they could procure refreshments for themselves and their horses, and divide the spoils. Captain Williams and John Odell remonstrated with them, but in vain, upon the danger of halting south of the Croton. The men weary and half famished, were bent upon rest and refreshment, and turned a deaf ear alike to command and advice. It was about nine o'clock in the forenoon when they proceeded to the farm house, and according to the custom of the time, commenced a sale of their booty at auction, for the purpose of making an equitable division. No sentinel was posted to guard against surprise, and the men, their tour of voluntary service having now drawn almost to a close, felt no longer a disposition to obey. Captain Williams and Odell alone remained upon the alert. The former considered the danger so imminent, that

he refused to dismount, and performed from necessity the duty of a common vidette, for the men under his command; while the latter after leaving his horse and mingling occasionally with his comrades in the house, rejoined his commander for a lookout, at frequent intervals.

While they were thus at Orser's, refreshing themselves in imaginary security, the refugee leaders had overtaken and encompassed them with their whole cavalry, leaving no way open for escape but that of the river. The attack was commenced by the firing of a volley upon the out-buildings of the farm, and the surprise proved complete and irremediable. Williams seeing at a glance that no successful resistance could be made, directed his volunteers to shift for themselves, and pricking hard, attempted to reach Tellers Point by the ice, the river being frozen nearly all the way across; but he was followed upon the spur by Lieutenant-colonel Holmes and Captain Totten, two of the refugee officers, who, better mounted than himself, happened to be ahead of their followers. Finding in a short time that escape was impracticable he dismounted, surrendered his sword, and was admitted to parole. At this moment, Odell was endeavoring to pass them, by making a detour to the left. On the first alarm he had sallied from the house, but found his horse had broken loose and disappeared. He lost not a moment in throwing himself upon the first steed he could find, and galloped at full speed upon the ice, in hopes of gaining the friendly shore of Cortland's Manor above the Croton, but as he attempted to pass the two royal officers, they rode out westerly and cut off his retreat. Odell now found that many of his companions were endeavoring to secure their safety by following the route he had taken, while close behind them were DeLancey's dragoons in full career, pushing forward with execration and outcry. Not being certain whether the pursuers, in the heat of combat, would give quarter, and unwilling to be captured, he turned his horse's head to the west, and rode toward the middle of the Hudson river, where the channel still remained unfrozen, determined, if the enemy persevered in the chase, to plunge into the water and make for the opposite shore.

Fortunately, the only refugees whose attention he had attracted were the two officers who had overtaken Williams, but these were instantly in full pursuit, and soon came up upon his right. Totten, who was nearest, approached and struck with his sword at momentary intervals, but his blows, somewhat awkwardly directed across his bridle arm, were readily parried by Odell, who constantly held his sabre at guard, contenting himself with remaining upon the defensive, and keeping both antagonists in view. At length Lieutenant-colonel Holmes was heard to exclaim: "Take care, Captain —he'll cut you," and immediately afterwards checked his speed, for the purpose of changing his position and of attacking the fugitive guide upon the left. Odell comprehended the manœuvre at once, and seeing himself about to be assailed on both sides simultaneously, adopted the only expedient now left for escape, and drawing rein with all his might, threw his horse almost upon his haunches at the very moment when Totten passed by. Rising in the stirrups, which were very short, the guide of Greenburgh now struck with his utmost force a blow at the refugee captain, which beat down his guard, cut through his cap, and wounded him in the head. Stunned by the stroke he reeled for a moment in the saddle and then fell upon the ice; while Odell recovered himself in sufficient time to parry a blow aimed at him by Holmes in passing on the other side. Rousing his horse with the spur, he now directed his flight northerly toward Teller's Point, and made such progress before his antagonists were in proper plight to follow, that they were content to give up the chase.

In personal appearance, the three capital guides were very dissimilar. Dyckman was not much above the middle size, but square built, and possessed of extraordinary muscular powers, with a large trunk, and shoulders of unusual breadth. Odell was about six feet in height and robust, and although long limbed and apparently heavy moulded was capable of great and rapid exertion. Oakley was thin, tall, straight and of uncommon activity.

A similar difference extended to their characters. Dyckman was of a frank and joyous temperament, and possessed

the generous deportment that makes quick and lasting friends. Feeling always assured of success, he embarked in the revolutionary contest with a sanguine enthusiasm that was constitutional, and during the whole struggle, it is said that he was never once dispirited and never doubted for a moment that the American arms would ultimately be triumphant, From the commencement of the war he continued steadily in the service of his country, always prepared to conduct a detachment, or to join or lead a scouting party, and always ready to encounter peril, often apparently for peril's sake. Danger seemed to be the element in which he delighted to move. This characteristic often led him to unnecessary personal exposure, and sometimes subjected him to reproach by the officers under whom he acted, who more than once, were compelled to remonstrate, and put before him in its liveliest form the fact, that his life belonged not to himself, but to his country, and that the safety of the detachment he was guiding, depended upon *his* well-being. In the last days of his life, after his wound had been pronounced mortal, he lamented that he could not live to witness the prosperity of his country under her new institutions, and a similar feeling of regret prevailed among his friends and acquaintances for many years afterward. Like the great leader and lawgiver of the Jews, he had a glimpse of the promised land, but was not allowed to tread upon its confines. For six years he had been familiar with death. During this time he had full often confronted the "King of terrors," and knew and disregarded him in all the variety of his forms. Until his last excursion he had passed through the perils of the field without the slightest injury, so that at length some, apparently half in earnest, began to assert of him an immunity, such as the Thane of Cawdor claimed for himself,—that he was not destined to be harmed by one of woman born. It was but a few weeks before he received his mortal wound, that he conducted a large party below, which was met in Fordham by a detachment of the enemy still more numerous, and driven in some confusion across the Bronx. Here, while the American force halted to form anew, Dyckman perceived a continental officer bare-

headed, and learned from him that, closely pursued through an orchard by a refugee dragoon, his cocked hat was caught and retained by its plume, in the boughs of a tree under which he had passed. The tree was pointed out, whereupon Dyckman exclaimed, "You shall have your hat again," and instantly spurred back across the Bronx. Although by this time, the orchard for the most part was in possession of the Royal forces, he did not hesitate to enter it, and having found the hat, bore it off upon the point of his sword, literally amidst a shower of balls, almost every hostile soldier, whether of foot or horse, following and firing at him unsuccessfully. In this plight, with the whole body of the enemy at his heels, he recrossed Williamsbridge at full speed, being welcomed back with shouts of exultation.

He never hesitated to accept a challenge from the enemy or to encounter superior numbers, however great the odds might be. Once, in 1781, while reconnoitring near Fort Independence at the head of five guides and volunteers, a patrol of DeLancey's dragoons far superior in numbers, advanced upon him with loud shouts; but he lost not a moment in becoming the assailant himself, and a long combat with the sabre ensued, in which five of the dragoons, each one of whom was wounded, were taken prisoners. Subsequently, about ten days before his death, he was in command of a party of thirteen, and while retiring from Morrisania, incumbered with prisoners and captured horses, he was pursued and overtaken by a numerous detachment of the enemy's dragoons, which approached with that confidence, that superior strength generally inspires; but the guide of Kingsbridge commanded his brave followers to face about, and by a vigorous charge put to flight the whole body of pursuers, of whom one was taken. His death, which was long and deeply lamented, appears related in the chief newspapers of the day, the Whig journals dwelling upon his remarkable courage and services, and mourning his departure, and the Royal gazettes of New York City, while they give some particulars of the skirmish, recording his fall with seeming satisfaction. In recounting the losses sustained by the Americans, Rivington

says: "Among the killed, is the noted Abraham Dyckman, a principal rebel guide." The circumstances which marked the end of his career were such as are hoped and prayed for by many a youthful and patriotic soldier. He fell while yet young in a good cause, in the service of his country, with his face to the foe, and with battle harness on his back. The only relic of what once belonged to him is his sword, a sabre of the largest size, which has been preserved with pious care, and is still shown to the curious, bearing undoubted marks of long usage in battle.

The Guide of Greenburgh was cast in a mould in many respects the opposite of that which gave form and impress to his lamented friend and companion [who fell prematurely in Eastchester]. Odell was a man of great caution and foresight, who never exposed himself unnecessarily, and was always on his guard against surprise, which he made it a point never to believe altogether improbable, and for which he was always prepared. When disasters came, or enterprizes failed, he was always ready with a plan for retreat, which long previously had been considered and matured. On the other hand, when circumstances required it, he faced danger and entered into combat, with as much resolution as his Kingsbridge comrade and with more coolness. From early life he was remarkable for sedateness, suavity of manners, and integrity, and throughout the contest for independence, he shielded from persecution, when it was in his power, such as were Royalists from principle, and never failed to discourage that license with respect to the security and property of others which seems to be a natural and inevitable consequence of civil war, in which his friends and comrades sometimes indulged.

When first appointed a guide, he was presented by Lieutenant-Governor Van Cortland, with a pair of pistols, a sword, and a fine grey horse, which last he invariably rode when on duty. He was unusually expert in the use of the sabre, and in consequence of possessing great length of arm, had acquired an art peculiar to himself, of suddenly leaning far back in the saddle, so as to strike a pursuer at an extraordinary distance.

This faculty was so well known, that when DeLancey's horsemen were in chase of patrolling parties to which he belonged, they always approached him cautiously.

He was well acquainted with the celebrated commander of the Westchester refugees, who entertained for him the highest regard. Sometime about the middle of the war, he was below with a flag of truce, upon which occasion Colonel DeLancey took him aside, and intimated to him the expediency of withdrawing for a while, along with Michael Dyckman, from his usual service upon the lines, as some of the Royalists, whose relatives had had their houses and barns destroyed, were much excited and determined to retaliate upon the Odells and Dyckmans, who, as influential Whigs, and persons engaged in all the important excursions below, were supposed capable of controlling illegal operations, and were to be held responsible for the acts of marauders professing allegiance to the upper party. DeLancey added, that although he was commanding officer of the refugees, it was not always in his power to control their proceedings. In consequence of this friendly intimation and for the purpose of saving their friends from outrage and loss of property, both Odell and Michael Dyckman withdrew for some time from Westchester, and served a campaign in the Mohawk country, the former as a lieutenant in Colonel Graham's regiment of the New York levies.

An instance of the circumspection for which he was distinguished, occurred in the month of June 1781. He had been below with a small party which had been very successful, and was returning at night, along the Sprain road, with seven or eight prisoners and their arms and horses, but upon passing a farmhouse somewhat celebrated for the hospitality of its owner, Mr. Jacob Vermilye, five or six of the men announced their determination of stopping for refreshment. It was in vain that the commander of the detachment and the guide opposed this proceeding, and remonstrated with them upon the danger of making a halt so near the enemy. The men said they were faint and weary, and without more words went in, while the rest of the party pushed forward with the

prisoners and booty, and made good their retreat. Odell had joined the commander in warning those who stopped, of their imprudence, but when he found remonstrance unavailing *he* also dismounted. "You will," said he, "in all probability be surprised, but I will try and bring you off." His first care was to secure his horse at some distance from the house. He then entered and told the men, if the enemy came upon them to keep near *him*, and to follow his example. The event he had foreseen happened while they were at supper, when the house was surrounded by a party of refugee cavalry under Lieutenant James Kipp, an officer of DeLancey's dragoons. Odell sprang out from a window, followed by the others, and throwing himself sword in hand upon the refugees, forced a passage for himself and the two who were nearest, Isaac Lent and a boy named Van Nostrand. The other four who had also jumped from the same window and followed their guide, were overpowered and taken. Odell soon afterward returned and obtained possession of his horse, but the steeds of his two companions in flight were captured.

After the termination of the war of independence, he settled upon the ample farm at Greenburgh, which he always afterward occupied, and returned to the peaceful pursuits of agriculture in which he was eminently successful, being considered one of the best practical farmers of his native county, and never allowing politics to seduce him from his favourite employment. His personal popularity and the influence of his family, might have enabled him to embark in public life with success, had he not preferred the independence and repose of a private station. Consistent in this determination, he never accepted but one office, that of Colonel in the New York State Militia. After a life distinguished for hospitality, benevolence, industry and frugality, and having been twice married, he died at his residence upon the heights of Greenburgh, on the 26th of October 1835, leaving two children and other descendants. His character may be summed up in a few words, and no one who ever knew him will dispute its accuracy. He was the consummate pattern of an intelligent and virtuous yeoman.

Oakley possessed the principal military characteristics of the other two, but to these were added traits peculiarly his own. To much of the headlong ardor of the one, he joined the circumspection and unerring judgment of the other, and superadded to both, a rapidity of weighing circumstances in the mental balance and a consequent quickness of decision in emergency, which left his contemporaries far behind. He did not provoke his destiny by bravery which had in view no definite result, like Dyckman; nor did he like Odell, always wait till the chances were in his favor, but often stood the hazard of the die when probabilities were somewhat adverse; always taking into the account, that fortune favors the aggressive party when its measures are well concerted.

In 1781, during the whole time the combined army was in Westchester, he lived constantly near General Count Rochambeau, with whom he was a great favourite; partaking during the marches and reconnoissances which then occurred, of all the hospitalities of the French commander's tent and table. His correct answers and prompt advice, when consulted upon the military routes to be traversed, his rapid and accurate perception of heights, and distances, and his sagacity in pointing out the proper direction for the various columns of the army to take through the impediments of the country, made a strong impression upon the principal officers, both French and American; and Rochambeau said to him,— "Oakley, nature designed you for the leader of an army."

He always possessed a nice sense of what was due to himself as a man of honor. When the combined forces retired from Westchester on their way to Yorktown, Washington invited him to dinner at headquarters, where he met several of the superior officers, convened, as he soon afterwards discovered for the purpose of persuading him to go below as a spy. Accordingly, as soon as the cloth was removed, the proposition was made to him by the American commander, and rejected instantly and with indignation. The officers present then joined Washington, in endeavouring to pacify this unexpected outbreak of displeasure, and after some time had elapsed, the whole party renewing the subject, made

another attempt to accomplish the object which had brought them together. They urged at much length, that at that particular moment, the good cause stood in great need of a confidential agent to reside with the enemy for special purposes; they expressed the exalted opinion entertained by them of his fidelity and address; declared that of all the persons they could think of he was the one best fitted for the required service, and concluded by appealing to his patriotism, for the sacrifice of all feelings that stood in the way of his consent. He replied that he was ready at all times to do whatever was just and reasonable in the cause in which they had all embarked: that if his country required it, he would surrender for her sake, everything he possessed except his honor, but that he would not forfeit his good name by acting in the infamous capacity of a spy. When the officers present again persisted in pressing the subject upon his consideration, he rose from the table, and after expressing in a few words, his regret that the Commander-in-chief and company had not conceived a more favourable opinion of his principles, abruptly took his leave. So profoundly disgusted was he at this attempt to draw from him services which he deemed dishonorable, that he resigned his employment as a guide, and withdrew to a distant part of the country; and, it was not till after the expiration of several months, and after much entreaty that he consented to return and resume his situation.

Once during the war Oakley was taken prisoner and confined along with his brother Isaac in the old Sugar House, but after a while effected his escape. At his request, some friends in New York City, furnished him with citizens clothes, whereupon he laid aside his military dress and announced to his brother his resolution of regaining his liberty. Averse to this proceeding, his brother endeavoured long but unsuccessfully to convince our guide that the attempt would be foolhardy, and that he could never be able to pass the British lines without discovery. He left the prison about noon, upon an extremely hot day of summer. By cutting one or two blankets in slips, he obtained materials out of which he twisted and prepared a rope, and by this, with the assistance of his

fellow prisoners he was lowered from one of the upper stories into the street, the attention of the sentinels in the meanwhile being directed to an opposite quarter by his friends, who pointed down the street, and inquired the meaning of the crowd of people there assembled. The rope was instantly drawn back, and the manoeuvre proved successful and unobserved. His first object was to reach a public house at the head of Harlem Lane, kept by the Widow Day, with whom he was well acquainted. It was about the middle of the afternoon when he presented himself to this well known and benevolent landlady, and threw himself upon her protection as an old acquaintance. For several minutes she wrung her hands in silent perplexity, and then informed him that her house was filled with Westchester refugees, who, if they saw him but for a moment, would recognize and remand him to prison. Regaining her presence of mind, she led him to a place of concealment. It was after sundown before her guests departed, and as it was not possible to procure a boat, she furnished our guide at his request, with some refreshments and with a cord, in order that he might form a raft for the purpose of crossing Harlem river with dry clothes. The night that came on was one of bright moonlight, and in a short time he constructed out of some rails and his rope, a tolerable raft, upon which he secured his clothes and refreshments, and then pushed out into the stream; but when near the middle of the creek, his strength which had been much impaired by sickness while in confinement began to fail, in addition to which he was attacked by the cramp. Weary and discouraged, he relinquished for a while, all further efforts to get across. At length a large bird alighted upon his raft, and after sitting still a few moments, again took wing and flew to the Westchester shore. Regarding this as a good omen, Oakley summoned up all his remaining powers, and after struggling forward for a long time with his raft, at last gained a footing on the Morrisania shore. Although scarcely able to stand upright when he reached land, and in the midst of enemies, his exact knowledge of the country enabled him to reach the American lines soon afterward.

His coolness in danger and the prestige of his well known presence and prowess, were strikingly exemplified in one of the last excursions in which he is known to have been engaged. He had been below as guide to a scouting party, from which having led it back to a place of safety, he separated at Mamaroneck; himself pursuing the road through Rye. As he was passing Rye-Neck, he saw Benjamin Griffin, a farmer with whom he was well acquainted at the door of a house which stood about one hundred yards from the highway; upon which, he passed through the gate, approached his friend, and saying that he was nearly famished, asked for something to eat, but refused to dismount. While partaking of the refreshments which were readily furnished, Griffin informed him that a party, apparently hostile, had halted on the road opposite to the house. It was in fact a detachment of refugee horsemen returning from Horseneck, to whom a Tory had pointed out the place where the hostile guide then was. Upon receiving this information, Oakley said at once that it was too late to retreat without discovery, and quietly finished his repast. He then grasped the reins of his bridle, drew his sword, and rode deliberately to the gate where the enemy were awaiting his approach. As he drew near he addressed the refugees with firmness. "You know who I am," said he, "and that I keep my promise; the first one among you that raises his hand against me, or offers to bar my passage, I will lay his head upon the ground from which he never again will raise it. Clear the way." Upon this, he brandished his sword right and left over his head, and striking spurs into his horse, galloped off at speed. His well known person and character, and the cool volubility with which his threats were poured forth, confounded and disconcerted his antagonists so much, that they allowed him to pass unmolested, and when, having regained presence of mind, they attempted pursuit, it was found he had gone too far to be readily overtaken.

In excursions below, particularly toward the close of the war, he often went down, the leader of the American detachment; and when acting only as guide, if his party encountered

unexpected difficulties that endangered its safety, the officer previously in command was superseded by general consent, and Oakley was chosen in his stead to conduct the retreat, in which he was invariably successful. Upon one of these occasions, when closely pursued by a large body of refugees, he did not extricate his party until he had crossed the Bronx at the head of his followers, nine different times.

Associating constantly, while the French Army lay in Westchester, with the gentlemen belonging to Rochambeau's staff, he took them often, when not on duty, to visit his relations and friends. These young soldiers, the most elegant and accomplished of the European nobility, although from early life accustomed to the splendor and gaiety of Versailles and Paris, on their arrival in America, had at once accommodated themselves to the manners of the country, and overcoming ancient prejudices by urbanity and address, had acquired general popularity with the inhabitants. They have now all passed away, but among them were those whose celebrity will justify a bare mention of them here, and whose disinterested services, gratitude requires us forever to remember and acknowledge.

Count Charles de Lameth, then assistant quarter-master-general, dangerously wounded in the following October at the siege of Yorktown; in the early years of the French revolution a member of the National and Constituent Assembly, republican in sentiment, and a leader of the Constitutional party.

The Chevalier Alexandre de Lameth, at that time employed as an officer of the general staff, during his whole subsequent career strongly inclined toward democracy; one of the ablest antagonists of Mirabeau in the Constituent Assembly, and the fellow laborer, friend, and fellow prisoner of La Fayette.

Count Mathieu Dumas, then one of Rochambeau's aides-de-camp, who during the empire, became a lieutenant-general, and wrote the memoirs of his times.

Count Axel de Tersen, a Swedish nobleman in the French service, remarkable for personal beauty, and elegance of manners, then also one of the French commander's aides:

distinguished in after years for a chivalric admiration of the unhappy Marie Antoinette, and whose assistance in 1791, was invoked and rendered, upon the unfortunate occasion of the royal flight to Varennes, as driver of the King's carriage.

The two brothers Berthier, adjuncts in 1781, to the general staff, the elder of whom (Pierre Alexandre) was long celebrated for his devoted attachment to Napoleon, one of whose marshals he was, and under whom he became Prince of Wagram and Neufchâtel.

Count Charles de Damas, another of the French commander's aides, during the campaign of 1781, a bold and dashing officer, and throughout life, a faithful friend and follower of the Bourbons.

Association for a considerable period with persons such as these, was of lasting benefit to the guide of Whiteplains, not only by imparting polish to his manners, but enlargement and liberality to his knowledge and opinions.

Oakley continued with the Continental and State troops upon the lines, until the spring of 1783. After the proclamation of peace, he returned to agricultural pursuits, and at a subsequent period married. Like his old friend and companion in arms Odell, he was ambitious of being a skillful cultivator of the soil, and steadily refused to engage in political life. His original education had been such only as the ordinary country schools of that day afforded, but careful self improvement in after years, enabled him to write and speak readily and correctly. Upon the great questions which agitated the public mind, he invariably formed opinions for himself, sometimes reducing them to writing. In disposition, he was sanguine, kind and sociable, and blameless in all the domestic relations: although having occupied stations of authority in early life, there was sometimes a seeming severity in his manners, and where he had a right to command, he always exacted a prompt obedience. During the latter years of his life, his constitution had become much impaired, in consequence of the great exposures to which he was subjected while in the public service. He died at Whiteplains, on the 29th of January 1805, on the paternal farm, where he

first saw the light, and left six children (of whom four are still living).

A stranger, traversing in these days, what was once the "Neutral Ground," and hearing for the first time recounted, the adventures of the "Three Great Guides," some of which in hardihood and success, approach the fictions of knight-errantry, might be moved to seek for their tombs, and might naturally say to those around him: "Where shall I find the monuments that have been erected by the gratitude of the age to indicate the sepulchres of such men, and to commemorate their lives, services and virtues?" Vain would be the inquiry, unsatisfactory the research. The remains of Dyckman were deposited in the obscure corner of a sequestered church yard at Crompond, where they repose forgotten, without a letter or a stone, to mark the last resting place of one of the bravest men that ever drew his sword in a just and noble cause. Even the precise locality of the spot where his bones now moulder is, and for ever must remain uncertain. The mortal relics of Oakley were interred in the Purchase street burying ground in the town of Harrison, where unmarked and unhonored they long lay, mingling with the ashes of the peaceful children of Fox. Later, and when almost half a century had passed by, the spot of sepulture was fortunately identified, and a plain stone put up, with this inscription (all that Quakerism permits) "*Cornelius Oakley, died January 29th, 1805, aged 49 years.*" Odell's body was placed in the Cemetery of the ancient Dutch Church on the banks of the Pocantico, near Tarrytown, in contiguity with the sepulchres of his ancestors. A small stone designates the grave, but his age, the day of his departure, and the bare fact that he was an officer of the revolution, are all the information it gives of one of New York's most faithful sons.

Had these men lived in the days of classical antiquity, poetry and art would have conspired to render them immortal, and they would have appeared in the Pantheon, along with heroes and demigods (in the society of Theseus and Hercules). At a later period they would have shone in Romance, in the company of Paladins and Princes and would have lived in

the same pages that have placed Amadis and Arthur upon the summit of renown. In our utilitarian age, their deeds have been suffered to fade almost from remembrance. A generation that owes them so much, fails from want of information to give them recognition, and treads without reverence upon the ashes of the heroes. Names that ought to awaken veneration, sound in the ears of a new race as names of strangers. No one has ever depicted their exploits in painting or sculpture; and chronicle and song, lavish in the praise of others, are silent in respect to them. Let us devoutly hope that such forgetfulness will not be permanent.

CHAPTER IV

THE DANBURY EXPEDITION

April 23d–28th, 1777

On the approach of spring in the year 1777, the Commander-in-chief of the British forces in the United North American States became desirous to commence the coming campaign by some enterprise that would distress the future operations of his adversaries, while it might add to the reputation he had already established. For these purposes the expedition up the North River, in the month of March, under Colonel Bird was undertaken. But the public stores deposited at Peekskill proved much smaller in quantity, and less in value than had been anticipated. General Howe's attention after this was directed toward Danbury, which for the five or six months then past, had become the principal depot of Continental provisions, for the Northern army. This place, although not more than twenty-three miles from the Sound, was generally supposed to afford ample security to the extensive magazines there collected; in consequence of the roughness of the intervening country, the frequent passage of troops through the town, and the zeal for independence of the inhabitants. The royal commander however was ambitious of giving confirmation to a truth generally recognized in war; that military deposits in an unfortified town, are never safe in the neighborhood of an enterprising enemy.

The command of the movement against Danbury was conferred upon Governor Tryon of New York, who had accepted the rank of Major-General of Provincials and was panting for military renown. This zealous guardian of colonial royalty is said to have devised the plan of the enterprise; of a temperament sanguine to the verge of assurance, he not only contemplated the destruction of the American magazines, as

the necessary result of his incursion, but made himself certain that the loyal inhabitants of the country about to be traversed, would exult in an opportunity of joining the King's standard, when no longer held in restraint by republican superiority.

The main body of the invading forces consisted of fifteen hundred men drawn from six different regiments of the line and three hundred of Governor Browne's corps, afterward called the "Prince of Wales' American Volunteers." To these were added several companies of young men eager for distinction, who ardently sought service upon this occasion. For the most part the individuals of these companies were American. Many of them however were officers, and even privates, belonging to the Royal army who were permitted to volunteer. A large corps of guides, natives of the western parts of Connecticut, well acquainted with the country about to be passed over, also accompanied the expedition; together with a subaltern's command, carefully selected from the Seventeenth regiment of light dragoons and superbly mounted. In numerical strength, the invaders amounted to considerably upward of two thousand men. Besides these, the expeditionary army was joined and supported by a detachment of the Royal artillery and six light field-pieces. Sir William Howe, while he gratified the zeal and ambition of Tryon, was not unmindful of his inexperience, and sent with him as lieutenants, two of the most accomplished officers in the British service,—the Brigadiers Agnew and Sir William Erskine, a precaution, the wisdom of which was abundantly justified by the sequel.

The Royal forces sailed from New York on the 23d of April in twenty-four transports, conveyed by the ship *Eagle* of sixty-four guns, and by the *Senegal* and *Swan*, sloops of war: the whole naval department being under the command of Captain Duncan. The fleet was three days on the water before it gained the point of debarkation. When they beheld the approach of a squadron apparently so formidable, the inhabitants of every accessible place on the Connecticut shore supposed themselves in particular to be objects of

attack. Women and children in consternation fled for safety to the interior.

On Friday the 25th, the British vessels appeared off Norwalk Islands, standing in for Cedar Point. Near this last place, situate on the easterly side of Saugatuck river, they anchored about four o'clock in the afternoon, soon after which the troops commenced landing. The debarkation was effected for the most part under cover of a thick fog. It was completed soon after nine o'clock. The enemy's forces thereupon moved forward about a mile, and formed by torch-light on Compo-Hill. They then marched up by the lane on the west side of Compo, until they approached the old Boston post-road called at that time the "King's highway." Behind a stone wall at this place where the lane crossed the highway, Captain Disbrou of Compo was posted with about fifty of the neighboring inhabitants pursuant to orders sent by Brigadier-General Silliman of the Connecticut militia who, from Fairfield, had witnessed the enemy's descent. It was profoundly dark when the head of the British column approached within ear-shot. Disbrou hailed the advance without drawing a word in answer. When a second challenge was given a voice that came out of the gloom said: "Wait—we will give you an answer presently."—The American captain thereupon ordered his men to fire, and then retreated toward Fairfield.

The Royal forces now continued their march northerly for about a mile and gained a road called the "Cross Highway." This they followed easterly in the direction of Greenfield, passing Haukanum, where now are seen the magnificent mansion and park of Morris Ketchum, Esquire, with parties upon their flanks, keeping the utmost silence and moving with military circumspection.—From time to time, during the night, they halted, making prisoners of such whigs as lived along the route and were found in arms, and of such as had become notorious for their zeal and activity. The houses along the way-side were filled with women and children, who had fled from Norwalk. These fugitives in their haste to hide from danger, had thus placed themselves in the lion's path.—Military

stores to a considerable amount were at this time deposited at Fairfield village, where the militia of the county had begun to assemble; as the destruction of this magazine was generally supposed to be the principal design of the invaders.—But the route they soon after pursued, clearly indicated their goal. It was not yet day when they arrived at Greenfield about a mile northwest of the Congregational church. Here they halted until sunrise. The dense fog which had hitherto enveloped them, then suddenly broke away. They now got again in marching order and took the road leading from Fairfield to Danbury. As the British forces were passing the borders of Greenfield and Weston, they were reconnoitred by Doctor Hurlbut, a young physician, of the vicinity, who, mounted upon a fleet horse, felt assured of his ability to make a good retreat on any exigency. Advancing near a dragoon, he amused himself and attracted the attention of the red coat, whom he menaced, by shaking at him one of the horse-whips at that time used by riders. Fired at this indignity, the dragoon suddenly dashed forward against this insulter. The medical cavalier wheeled about for escape on the same instant. Both parties for nearly a mile rode with all the speed that the spur could draw from their coursers. The soldier at first gained upon his adversary, but the Doctor was not deceived in the fleetness and endurance of his horse, and effected his escape but with the loss of his hat.

The King's troops continued their march along the road that passed by the old Episcopalian Church at Weston, since demolished and rebuilt elsewhere, over Jump Hill, and through Reading-on-the-ridge. The British commander took great pains throughout this day's march to maintain order among his followers and to conciliate the people of the country. He frequently alighted and partook of milk and other refreshments. Plunderers were punished upon the spot. At Weston, where the invaders halted for a short time, a lady was robbed by a soldier of a new dress. However, being a woman of spirit, it was not long before she made her loss known by an outcry so loud that it reached the ears of Tryon, who sought out the ravished garment, compelled immediate res-

titution, and caused the offender to be scourged severely with the ramrod of a musket.

The Royal volunteers procured some of the best horses in the country from their relatives and friends along the road, and joining themselves to part of the regular dragoons, formed a strong body of mounted men. These the British commander sent forward, as an advanced guard under an officer, who everywhere requested the country people to remain at their home, promising security and kind treatment. Ample payment for whatever necessaries they took, was generally made by the officers. They however advised the inhabitants to gratify the reasonable wants of the soldiers many of whom were faint and hungry, and asked for bread and cider; which provisions were cheerfully furnished by the householders, who were but too happy to escape with so light a requisition.

At Reading-on-the-ridge, where the British forces arrived in the forenoon, they halted and took breakfast. Small parties of the American militia, meanwhile hovered about watching every opportunity for attack.— While Brigadier Agnew, who had entered a farm-house at this place, was engaged in his morning's repast, an enterprising volunteer named William Hawley, ventured suddenly into the hostile line of march, overpowered the groom that held the general's horse at the door, and vaulting into the saddle, escaped with his prize.

Having recruited their exhausted strength by food, and by an hour's rest, the invaders resumed their march, crossing Hoyt's Hill and passing through Bethel.—It was about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, when the horsemen of the vanguard entered the village of Danbury. These cavaliers consisted of the greater part of the light dragoons and of such of the Royal volunteers as had managed to mount themselves by the way. As they approached the place, they put spurs to their horses and came in at full speed, some distance ahead of their main body.

When the expedition sailed from New York on the 23rd of April, the American forces at Danbury consisted of about three hundred Continental troops under Colonel Huntington

of the regular army, and one hundred militia under Colonel Cook. But on the same day, a British fleet composed of men-of-war and transports, ascended the Hudson and several vessels anchored off the Eastern shore, making a show of landing a body of soldiers somewhere near Dobbs Ferry. Under these circumstances, General McDougall who commanded at Peekskill, became alarmed for the safety of his post, and made a requisition upon Huntington, for the regulars under his command. All of these with the exception of about fifty, were sent to Peekskill accordingly on the 24th and 26th of April.

While the enemy on the 25th were landing at Compo, General Silliman sent out expresses to rouse the country. He wrote to Colonel Cook, informing him of the invasion, and requiring him in the most urgent terms to muster and send forward to Fairfield, the men of his regiment as fast as they should come in. Cook was at the same time directed to dispatch messengers with the news to Brigadier-general Wolcott of Litchfield, and to other officers of the Connecticut militia. The contents of Silliman's letter were made known to Huntington a short time before three o'clock in the morning of the 26th, and such was the energy of the latter and his associates, that four hours afterward, the neighbouring militia companies were on the move toward Fairfield. Intelligence however soon came that the British forces, in full march for Danbury, had already reached the borders of the adjacent town of Reading. All thereafter was confusion, and the men for the most part returned home for the protection of their families.

On Tryon's approach, Colonel Huntington who occupied the town with a force now reduced to about fifty Continental troops and one hundred militia, retired northerly to some neighboring heights. From this position, in full view of the enemy, he continued during that day and the following morning, to watch their proceedings. When at Greenfield, Governor Tryon set his face toward the north, the object of his inroad was no longer doubtful. General Silliman immediately dispatched additional messengers to the Continental

commander at Danbury, with orders to remove if possible, or if not, to destroy the magazines. This mandate unfortunately came too late to be of much avail. A few light articles were secured, but the others, for the most part deposited in private houses, were not susceptible in the exigency, of being destroyed without causing great loss to the inhabitants. They were in consequence abandoned to the enemy.

The active Whigs of Danbury with their families fled northerly into the open country, but a few resolute men remained in the village until the invaders entered. Some of these even had the hardihood to attack the foremost of the British vanguard. Three whites and a black man took post in a large mansion belonging to Major Starr, from which they fired upon the horsemen, but the house was surrounded and set on fire a moment afterward. The inmates were cut down and thrown into the flames as they attempted to escape. A young English officer who accompanied the mounted volunteers, when they were fired upon, related at the time that he sprang from the saddle and ran the black man through with his rapier. He said further that the negro fell, but immediately afterward rose from the ground for revenge, and dropped dead the next instant, while attempting to bayonet his antagonist, in which he had nearly succeeded.

A man named Starr, who also fired at the troopers, was pursued, overtaken, cut about the head and arms, and left on the ground. He was not however wounded mortally. Having fallen upon his face, he took the precaution to lie still, and his pursuers supposing him dead, retired; upon which he crawled away, recovered, and lived afterwards to a good old age.

As an apology for these severities, the British officers alleged that they wished to put a stop to the militia practice of firing from houses. They gave out that therefore, they made it an invariable rule to give no quarter to those who fired from such cover, and that in addition they always burnt the buildings themselves.

Mr. Silas Hamilton, an aged farmer residing a short distance north of the town, having heard that the British troops were

approaching; resolved to save a roll of domestic cloth belonging to him, which was then in the hands of a clothier, in the southern extremity of the village. He rode instantly to the cloth-dressers and had just tied one end of the piece to the rear of his saddle, when the advanced guard of the enemy came in sight. In a moment afterward he was in the stirrups, pricking homeward, but followed upon the spur by three troopers who had observed him. After a race of five hundred yards the horsemen overtook him, and called for a surrender. This the hardy husbandman refused, continuing his flight. The foremost trooper then struck at him with his sword, but at that moment the cloth partially unrolling, one end of it fluttered in the breeze, and frightened the pursuer's horse. Hamilton continued to urge his horse forward and the dragoons persevered in the pursuit for more than a mile. They overtook the fugitive several times; but whenever they approached within striking distance, the flying extremity of the cloth was in the way, disconcerting both horse and rider, and the resolute farmer at length escaped.

Being now in full possession of the village, the British commanders prepared for the defence of their position. They placed out-guards at the principal approaches, and planted their field-pieces in battery upon Deer Hill, a commanding eminence on the western side of the main street.

The public stores that General Tryon found in Danbury much exceeded his expectations, both in value and amount. His first intention was to convey them within the Royal lines. Finding it impossible to procure carriages for this purpose, they were by his orders effectually destroyed. In this service the soldiers were employed during most of the night and part of the following morning. Barns, storehouses, and even private dwellings, were filled with Continental provisions, tents and clothing. In the Episcopalian Church, the pork and flour there deposited reached to the galleries, and the barrels containing these provisions were rolled out into the highway, and burnt by the enemy along with other stores. After the fire had been sometime kindled, it is said that the melted fat ran in streams along the prin-

cipal village street. The light caused by this extensive conflagration, during the deep darkness of a rainy night, alarmed the inhabitants of distant towns, and gave them the earliest intelligence of the sack of Danbury. At Fredericksburg in the State of New York, twelve miles off, there was also a great quantity of Continental stores, and the well-affected people of the place beheld in the lurid horizon, the devastation that followed the steps of the invader. Apprehending a similar visit, they were on the alert all night in preparations for defence. The British commanders at Danbury in the meanwhile sent out no detachments, and paid little or no attention to the small American parties that hovered in the vicinity. The King's soldiers were engaged alternately in revelry and destruction, until the appearance of daylight.

Early in the morning General Tryon received intelligence that the whole force of the country was collecting for the purpose of cutting off his retreat along the strong and dangerous ground which he must needs pass on his return to the shipping. He now proceeded with the utmost haste to the completion of his work. Hitherto only a single dwelling had been burnt, but as there was no longer time to remove the stores from their places of deposit, the buildings that contained them were set on fire and consumed along with their contents. The flames spreading on every side, many contiguous houses occupied by the inhabitants, shared unintentionally a similar fate. In this scene of excitement and tumult while upward of forty buildings were in full blaze, including a Congregational church and nineteen dwelling houses, the drums of the invaders beat to arms, and the troops having formed in marching order, commenced, between eight and nine o'clock, a rapid retreat. The camp-followers, as the army moved along, were, as usual, busily employed in collecting and driving off such horses and cattle as they could find.

On the first landing of the enemy, General Silliman, then casually in the neighborhood of Saugatuck, sent expresses in different directions to assemble the militia at Fairfield, for the protection of the Continental property there deposited. On the ensuing morning when it had become

evident that Danbury was the mark at which the invaders were aiming, he hastened forward in pursuit of them at the head of about four hundred men, all the forces he had been able to rally. In the afternoon he was overtaken by Brigadier General Arnold, at that time in the state, engaged in superintending the recruiting service, and who in obedience to his instincts, had hurried onward for the purpose of playing his part upon the stage of strife. At Reading they were joined by some additional troops, and toward evening by Major-General Wooster, Commander-in-chief of the Connecticut militia. This officer on hearing at New Haven of the enemy's landing, had posted toward the scene of action leaving orders for the militia to be mustered and sent forward as soon as possible. When Arnold and Wooster came up with Silliman, the former were either accompanied or followed at short distances by small bands of volunteers, consisting mostly of young men filled with enthusiasm and ready for action. These additional troops made the pursuing party six hundred strong. Wooster now took command of the American forces, and the three generals after a short consultation, marched against the enemy through a heavy rain. At half-past eleven o'clock at night they reached Bethel, a village three or four miles from Danbury. The men, many of whom had marched thirty miles without food, were by this time very much fatigued, while their arms had become useless from the wet. Here the pursuers determined to halt for rest and refreshment.

Being uncertain which way the enemy would return to their shipping, the Americans soon after daylight on the ensuing morning, took post upon a crossroad in two divisions, so that in necessity, they might support each other. One of these detachments under Arnold and Silliman was stationed near the highway leading from Danbury to Norwalk, and the other under the Major-General, not far from the Fairfield road. Here they waited until about half past nine o'clock. Information was then received that the British army had left Danbury an hour previously, retreating in a westerly direction toward the State of New York. It was now supposed

that Tryon's object was to cross the County of West-Chester and re-embark on the Hudson between Peekskill and Tarrytown, near which latter place it was reported that the enemy had landed eight hundred men on the day before. Arnold accordingly wrote forthwith to McDougall urging him to oppose the adverse troops in front, while the pursuing forces under himself and the other generals, would hasten forward to overtake and assail the British rear. Soon after however it was ascertained that Tryon was marching southerly from Ridgebury, towards Long Island Sound. Four hundred men were now detached under Silliman and Arnold to gain and occupy some position upon the Norwalk road in advance of the enemy. In the meanwhile General Wooster who had been joined by a few additional volunteers and by one hundred and forty Continental recruits from Massachusetts under Lieutenant Colonel Smith, hastened forward in pursuit of the foe at the head of a force which had now attained a numerical strength of about three hundred and fifty. It was between eleven o'clock and midday, when he overtook the enemy between Ridgebury and Ridgefield. They were retiring from Keeler's Mills where they had halted for the purpose of destroying a large quantity of flour and Indian Corn belonging to the United States. The American commander instantly attacked the British rear-guard, and captured several prisoners. Following the retreating force, he continued to skirmish with them for nearly an hour, leading forward in person, his inexperienced followers, and constantly exposing himself to the hostile fire. At length the British were so closely pressed that their rear-guard halted upon some rising ground about a mile and a half from Ridgefield, and facing about stood at bay. They were now waiting apparently for a close attack and meanwhile with three pieces of cannon played upon their pursuers. Wooster perceived a good opportunity of capturing one of the British field-pieces by a rapid movement. He thereupon addressed in words of encouragement his foremost men; pointed out the feasibility of the enterprise, and ended a short harangue by calling upon every brave American to follow him. His horse at that moment

was shot but he instantly mounted another, belonging to one of his aides and rode along the highway, sword in hand, followed with alacrity by those to whom he had appealed. The veteran leader was now in the sixty-eighth year of his age. As he approached the end of his career, it seemed as though his life had coursed through time in a circle, and that having completed one revolution, he had now entered upon a second, with the ardor that belongs to the morning of existence. It was afterward well remembered that during this his last day's service, his words and movements displayed all the enthusiasm and intrepidity that had characterized his early days. They were the last bright flashes of an expiring taper. Just at this time a British cannon shot took effect among his followers, whom it covered with sand. Perceiving some disorder in their ranks, he turned about in the saddle and addressing them in an oblique position; "Come on my boys," said he, "never mind such random shots. Follow me." He had barely finished the utterance of these words, when a musket ball struck him in the body producing spinal dislocation, followed by paralysis. He dropped from the saddle, and was conveyed first to a neighboring house and then in a litter to Danbury, where he died five days subsequently.

The ground along the roadside where he fell was long designated by two magnificent chestnut trees which grew in contiguity, and seemed sentinels stationed to watch the identity of the place until a grateful country should erect some permanent memorial. But these monarchs of the field have long since disappeared from their post, and consigned it to tradition. More than eighty years have now gone by, and yet nothing has been done to embalm with certainty the locality of never dying interest. Undistinguished by cenotaph or pillar, unmarked even by a mound of earth or a heap of stones that might provoke inquiry, the aspect of the spot remains essentially unchanged and the unconscious traveller as he pursues his journey across this memorable plain, gazes without reverence upon the soil where for him and for others a hero fell, and passes onward without emotion because he passes unwittingly.

Truth calls however for the admission, that Wooster has not been entirely forgotten. During the spring of 1854, his parent state relieved herself in part from the heavy charge of unthankfulness that rested upon her, by uniting with the people of Danbury and the Masonic Brotherhood, for the purpose of rendering to this devoted son monumental honors at the place of his interment. Until the erection of this tardy memorial the veteran who had served his country in three wars, and fell with her standard in his hand, had not a solitary stone or inscription, to preserve his name or commemorate his virtues; and slept in Danbury in a grave, which time had rendered as uncertain almost as it was unhonored.

The death shot of Wooster is said to have proceeded from an American loyalist who carried a musket of unusual length. This man was posted along with some volunteers in a barn east of the road and on the right of the British rear-guard, as it appeared after having faced about. Recognizing Wooster, although at a distance of nearly three hundred yards, he asked permission to fire at the American general. "You shall not do so," said his commanding officer; "The interval is too great for a successful shot and the attempt will subject us to retaliation." Persisting in his request, the officer at last yielded with reluctance to the royalist's importunity, when the latter fired with fatal effect.

After the fall of the American commander, his men became discouraged and fell back. Tryon now made a general halt in order to rest his followers and to examine the situation of the new adversaries he had discovered in front.

While Wooster was yet engaged in operating against the British rear guard, Arnold with his usual rapidity of movement had made a forced march across the country. Between eleven and twelve he took possession of Ridgefield, with a detachment which some reinforcements had now augmented to upwards of five hundred muskets. The delay occasioned to the enemy by the repeated attacks made upon them gave Arnold time to intrench himself. At the northern extremity of the village, where the main street crossed a ridge, he threw up a breast work or barricade formed out of earth, rails, car-

riages and lumber, and with upward of two hundred men took post at this spot. His right flank was protected by Stebbins' house, with its barns and out buildings, while his left was secured by a ledge of rocks. The residue of his force was placed so as to provide additional safety for his flanks, by taking possession of two roads, parallel with, and on either side of, the principal street, and distant from it respectively about four hundred yards in easterly and westerly directions. Here he waited for the enemy's appearance.

Before Tryon resumed his march upon Ridgefield, he had received a report of the position taken to check his progress. He thereupon reconnoitred carefully a second time and at length about two o'clock in the afternoon, proceeded to the attack at the head of his whole force. He moved forward with great caution, secured on the flanks, by guards of nearly two hundred men each; having three or four pieces of cannon in his front, and advancing with music and all the military pomp and circumstance that were at his command. Perceiving that Arnold was most vulnerable upon the left, his proceedings were directed towards that quarter, and the American general soon found himself upon the point of being out-flanked. The British commander slowly marched against the barricade, with the main body, which halted from time to time for the purpose of cannonading. Meanwhile a strong detachment moved forward briskly, under cover of an orchard, and crossing some low grounds, began to mount the rocks that protected Arnold's position upon the west. For the space of ten minutes the Americans maintained their ground in the midst of an incessant fire of musketry. Spurring to the spot where the British had been striving to effect a lodgment, Arnold was leading forward some volunteers to drive his assailants from the ledge, where they had just established themselves, when the latter fired simultaneously at the distance of about thirty yards. The volley mortally wounded the horse of the American general and threw the greater part of his men into confusion. The dying charger fell upon his knees but Arnold remained motionless in the saddle. Those who saw him supposed him to be badly wounded. Sud-

denly one of the enemy's soldiers ran up, exclaiming, "Surrender!" "You are my prisoner." This antagonist was a Connecticut royalist named Coon, who had formerly belonged to New Fairfield, and was ambitious of the distinction which would arise from the capture of the American commander. The Brigadier-general continued quiet until his adversary's near approach gave full assurance to his weapon. He then fired with a pistol which he had held concealed in his right hand, and Coon fell dead upon the ground. While Arnold, withdrawing himself from the horse and disengaging his holster walked coolly off, retiring among the last of his men.

About the time of Tryon's assault upon Ridgefield village, the Americans who held possession of the parallel road on the east were briskly attacked by a British detachment to which they offered a steady resistance until the fall of Lieutenant Colonel Gould of the militia and of their commanders. They then fell into confusion and abandoned their position.

After General Wooster's disaster, the actual command of the American forces was assumed by Arnold, General Silliman with great propriety and forbearance, deferring his commandatory rights to the popular wishes, which were in favor of an older and more experienced soldier.

At first Arnold attempted to rally his followers for another combat at Ridgefield. Finding this impracticable, he fell back toward the Sound with all the men he could muster. Both he and General Silliman immediately caused it to be given out as their orders, that the militia and volunteers should assemble early the next morning at Saugatuck bridge, where another attempt to stop the enemy would be made.

The action at Ridgefield lasted for about an hour and was succeeded by some desultory skirmishes. When these had all terminated the day was on the wane. The British commander finding that his soldiers were almost overcome from want of rest and from their late hard service; determined until the morrow to proceed no farther. During the afternoon he sent out several small parties, which destroyed some Continental stores in the vicinity.

When night came, the King's forces, having first taken the precaution to form themselves into a square, bivouacked upon Ressiguie's Ridge. This was a smooth upland field, by the roadside, half a mile south of Ridgefield village and on the easterly side of the highway leading to Norwalk. In want of food and of covering for the night, the invaders did not hesitate to appropriate these necessaries wherever they could be found, and the inhabitants of the village in consequence, lost part of their provisions and cattle and some of their clothing. In order to obtain for the weary soldiers some hours of undisturbed repose, numerous out-guards were posted around the spot where the main body lay, but even this precaution did not secure a quiet sleep. During the whole night small parties of the American militia prowled about the redcoats, frequently approaching near enough to fire with effect. Weary nature however sometimes had her way, and the Royalists, even those on guard, at moments slept soundly, allowing several prisoners to regain their liberty. Some of these were scarcely hailed by the sentinels and one escaped unchallenged.

At the earliest approach of dawn the British drums beat to arms. The Royal Forces soon afterward marched toward the Sound by the Norwalk road. Previously to their march, they fired several houses situated upon the most elevated ground about the village, for the purpose, as was supposed, of giving the fleet a signal of their locality. No material opposition was made for several hours and they approached Wilton without molestation. About a quarter of a mile north from where the Congregational church has since been erected, they wheeled to the left and leaving the Ridgefield road, crossed the fields until they reached a smooth piece of elevated ground near the Norwalk and Danbury road; about half a mile north of the place where St. Matthew's church now stands. Here they halted and took breakfast. At about nine o'clock in the forenoon, they resumed their retreat along the highway, last mentioned.

When the royal forces drew near the bridge that crosses the west branch of Norwalk river, they entered a house

that contained a great quantity of merchandise, which they began to destroy. Being informed by Mrs. Belden the wife of the proprietor, that these goods were the private property of a person then absent from home they at once desisted. Near by, stood a large barn which contained military stores, such as tents, field forges, and chests of arms and ammunition. These they immediately set on fire. One of their flank guards, scoured some contiguous fields and woods on the west and found a great quantity of rum and other articles belonging to Congress. These they proceeded to destroy with all possible dispatch, as they were now annoyed, and fired upon by small parties of the pursuing militia which continued to harass them in flank or rear, during the residue of the retreat.

At Lambert House, nine miles from Ridgefield, they took the road to Saugatuck. While traversing the eastern part of Wilton, as they were engaged in destroying some provisions belonging to the public, they were attacked by Colonel Huntington. This officer early in the morning had put himself at the head of the troops he had commanded at Danbury and having collected what he could of Wooster's scattered forces marched for the King's army. Some volunteers and militia from Ridgefield and elsewhere joined him as he passed along, and after a forced march of several hours, he found himself at about eleven o'clock with five hundred followers, in sight of the enemy. In the skirmish that ensued the Americans had none killed and only five or six wounded. The British loss has never been ascertained.

As the adverse armies moved along, hunger led the men to the farm houses. The matrons who remained at home, conconsulted policy and humanity alike. They placed before these visitors the best food at their command. Some of the housewives baked all day long, supplying with bread first the British soldiers and then the American. At a large farm house in Wilton, a party of the royal officers invaded with success, the milk room, where they robbed the pans of their cream, performing the manipulations of the skimmer quite as adroitly as they practiced assaults with the sword.

Soon after eleven o'clock, the vanguard of the British forces, halted at a point about two miles from Saugatuck-bridge over which their route lay. The possession of this bridge being considered indispensable, a party of officers rode forward immediately to reconnoitre.

After the action at Ridgefield, Arnold had moved rapidly toward Saugatuck, in the neighborhood of which place he spent most of the night in preparations for the next day's encounter. Finding that the British shipping still lay off Compo Point, he justly concluded the King's troops would re-embark where they had landed. About one mile and a half north of Saugatuck-bridge, the road to Danbury passed grounds somewhat elevated, which were covered at that time with a thick growth of wood. Here, in conjunction with General Silliman, Arnold proposed to stop the further retreat of the enemy. At nine o'clock in the forenoon of the 28th, the two generals had collected at this place about six hundred men. They were for the most part militia men belonging to Fairfield County but among them were some troops of a superior description, and upon which the American commanders placed a strong and well founded reliance. These last forces consisted of a small detachment from Lamb's Artillery, with three field-pieces, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Oswald; part of the artillery company belonging to Fairfield village with another gun; sixty Continental recruits, and three companies of volunteers from New Haven. A breastwork, which during the morning, Arnold had caused to be thrown up across the road, and which was flanked on each side by a dense forest, gave additional strength to his position. His troops were in high spirits. Conscious that they occupied a strong post and confiding fully in the fortune and courage of their leader, they felt anxious for the approach of the enemy.

But Tryon having secured the principal objects of the inroad, was anxious for a reunion with his fleet, without additional loss or further fighting. Having made an exact reconnoissance of the American position, he found that it could not be carried without great sacrifice of life, and was well

aware that a repulse would be fatal. He deliberated for a short time with his principal officers in extreme perplexity. At length one of the guides offered to conduct the royal troops further up the river, to a place where they might cross in safety. Upon this they wheeled about toward the north, and marching along the Saugatuck nearly a mile, at length reached a ford, where they passed over to the other side; and then continued their retreat with rapidity along the eastern bank of the stream.

General Silliman who had joined Colonel Huntington and taken command of the detachment under the latter, now made the utmost efforts to overtake the retreaters. The hostile forces moved toward the Sound in parallel columns, being about half a mile from each other. The Americans marched along the west bank of the Saugatuck. From time to time each party cannonaded the other with animation. As they approached Saugatuck bridge, about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, Colonel Deming at the head of a small corps of regular troops forded the river where it was breast high, undiscovered by the British forces, and then falling suddenly upon their rear and left, galled them exceedingly. General Arnold now requested Silliman to cross the Saugatuck, and attack the rear of the royal troops, while he himself hurried forward and passed the bridge, in order to assail the enemy in flank. His troops at first were thrown into confusion, by the British cannonade directed against the bridge, and fell back. In a few minutes he restored order and led them across. Tryon had halted, and now sent forward a detachment apparently, with the intention of occupying the bridge. Having taken possession of Couch-Hill, and other neighboring heights he commenced at the same time a violent cannonade upon Silliman and his followers, which prevented them from fording the Saugatuck. Arnold was moving on with his usual impetuosity, to find some position, where he might check the further progress of his opponents. Word came to him that a strong British detachment was about to take possession of the bridge. This operation would have endangered his retreat, at the same time that it separated him from the rest

of his forces. He now retrograded as he had advanced, with alacrity, and united himself to Silliman under the fire of the British artillery. After a halt of about half an hour and a cannonade of twenty minutes, Tryon again pressed forward, with the utmost vigour. All the American forces now crossed the Saugatuck, united on its left bank, and formed in two columns, with two field-pieces attached to each. The columns marched in pursuit, the one under Arnold endeavoring to gain the right flank of the enemy, and the other under Silliman pushing for the British left. Such however was the rapidity with which the King's troops retreated from the Saugatuck, that toward five o'clock in the afternoon and before the Americans could overtake them, they reached the high grounds, which they had occupied on their first landing.

The van of the royal forces commenced an immediate re-embarkation. The centre and rear faced about and formed upon Compo Hill. The American artillery-men under Lieutenant-colonel Oswald were now ordered to Compo rocks a position that commanded a view of the hostile squadron. There they continued firing upon the boats engaged in taking off the enemy, until that operation was completed.

Chafed to see the invaders preparing to elude his grasp, Arnold with all the ardor that belonged to his fiery temperament, was now engaged in the formation of two columns of attack. One was to be led by himself against the enemy on the northwestern part of Compo Hill, while the other was to be conducted by Silliman against its northern extremity. By this united attack, he hoped to overthrow the British general, before he should have had time to finish his re-embarkation.

During the afternoon of the 27th there appeared upon the scene of action Colonel John Lamb of the artillery and Colonel Hugh Hughes Deputy-quarter-master-general. These were two Continental officers, who had seen service. Having heard of the invasion, they had hastened forward on horseback from a distant part of Connecticut, to join the American forces. On their way they were overtaken by others who were bound for the same theatre with similar determinations. Although assisted by guides, such was the prevailing confusion,

that these volunteers sought in vain for the American commanders throughout the country between Ridgefield and Norwalk, during the whole afternoon and night. It was daybreak on the 28th, when they arrived at Saugatuck bridge. Arnold who had spent most of the night on horseback, in rallying men and means for a final conflict, was then at Greenfield. They thereupon posted to this latter place, but before they reached it, the man of incessant movement had returned by another road and resumed his command at the bridge. Sometime in the forenoon however, Hughes obtained an interview with Arnold and volunteering his services as aide de camp, acted for a while in that capacity. Lamb at first, took command of the artillery, but in the afternoon, resigned in favor of his lieutenant. The Colonel of artillery then rode to a body of about two hundred volunteers who had recently arrived, and declaring who he was, proposed to lead them on. The volunteers put themselves at once under Lamb's command. When they approached Compo-Hill, placing himself at their head, he led them forward in advance of the two columns then forming, and gaining a position about half way up the hill near its northern extremity posted them behind a stone wall within one hundred yards of the British forces, whom they galled extremely. Several of the enemy's field-pieces now directed their fire upon this band of volunteers. Lamb perceiving that his men were much annoyed in consequence, addressed them, proposing to rush forward at their head and capture the hostile artillery by a sudden charge. The volunteers readily consented and the chivalrous Colonel leaping from his horse, took the post of honour in their front.

At this moment the enterprise against Danbury may be said to have reached its crisis. For three days and nights the British troops had been almost without sleep. Some of the soldiers were dropping upon the road from excessive fatigue. Out of sixty rounds of ammunition, with which each of the privates had been supplied, only two were left; in addition to all which, Tryon himself was indisposed and General Agnew wounded in the shoulder. On the other hand General

McDougall from Peckskill, at the head of twelve hundred men, and a field piece, had already reached the borders of the State and was pressing rapidly forward toward the scene of conflict, from which he was distant but a few miles. Small bands of volunteers were constantly coming in, and the Americans were not only augmenting in number, and increasing in confidence, but were commanded by one of the most active and daring generals of the age. Nothing but superior ability and good fortune sufficed to extricate the invaders, from their perilous situation. Luckily for them, Sir William Erskine, who now commanded, had foreseen the exigency. By his advice all the marines from the vessels of war, had been landed and united to such of the soldiers as were the least fatigued. Four hundred of these last had previously been selected from the ranks. Out of the soldiers and marines he formed two columns of attack, unequal in size, sending forward the smaller one to take Silliman in flank. He thereupon instantly put the larger one in motion and led it to the charge in person, against the volunteers upon the hillside.

Colonel Lamb, sword in hand, was at this time upon the wall, at the head of his men whom he was cheering forward. They, too, were in the act of following him across the fence, when he was struck by a grape shot. Dangerously wounded in the body, he fell on the northwesterly side of the enclosure. The volunteers who had hitherto pressed forward with intrepidity, now paused in discouragement, from the mishap of their commanding officer, but again took post behind the wall and renewed their fire. Arnold's column was coming up to their support, and all they wanted was a leader in whom they reposed confidence.

It was just at this juncture that Erskine led his men against the volunteers. While the result of the hostile movement was yet doubtful, there occurred in the enemy's favor, one of those unexpected incidents, in which destiny seems to stretch forth her hand for the purpose of baffling probability. Among the Provincial officers that accompanied the expedition, there was one who claimed consanguinity with the exiled dynasty of Great Britain. This was Major Ferdinand Smith Stuart,

a grandson of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth. A native of Scotland he had been educated a physician and subsequently settled in Virginia. When the revolutionary troubles commenced, the hereditary hatred of the Stuart did not prevent him from taking sides with the house of Hanover, and he joined one of the regiments raised in America for the service of the crown. He was in the front rank of Erskine's column as it moved forward. Of an impetuous constitution, he addressed, as they came to the edge of the hill, some British and American volunteers from New York, who eager for distinction, were pressing onward in the foremost ranks. Calling upon them to follow him, he rushed forward upon Lamb's volunteers sword in hand, with loud shouts, at the head of about twenty officers and men. This unlooked for assault, supported as it was by a strong body of troops, advancing to the charge, at quick step, created a panic among the volunteers, who instantly fled. At the foot of the hill, Erskine with great promptness, led his detachment against the column at that time advancing under Arnold. The American general held his men steady until the enemy advanced to the attack with bayonets. Discouraged by the flight of the volunteers, some of the militia then broke from their ranks, and at length the whole column retired in disorder. During the charge, Arnold was exposed to assault from British bayonets, and his horse received a wound in the neck. Silliman's followers, who had witnessed the defeat of the volunteers and the repulse of Arnold's column, finding themselves upon the point of being assailed at the same time, and on either flank, by the two British detachments, became infected with the prevailing panic, fell into confusion and were driven from the field.

Taking a hasty advantage of this lull in the tempest, the British commander put the finishing stroke to his retreat; completing the embarkation of his forces just as the sun approached the horizon, and before Arnold could reduce his men again to military order. The whole hostile fleet thereupon immediately weighed anchor and stood across the Sound for Huntington on Long Island.

The loss of the invaders during the expedition in killed, wounded and missing, was acknowledged by them to have been nearly two hundred, and is generally supposed to have been more. That of the Americans was never ascertained, but was probably not so great. The latter claimed to have taken more than forty prisoners, and the former fifty, besides many active whigs and committee-men who were conducted to the prisons of New York.

The collection of military and hospital stores committed to the flames during this inroad, at Danbury, and in the neighboring towns of Ridgefield and Wilton, in the course of the retreat, was very extensive. The precise amount has never been ascertained, but from the best authority, it consisted, among a variety of other things, of the following articles, viz.: from two to four thousand barrels of pork and beef; more than a thousand barrels of flour; two thousand bushels of grain; three hundred puncheons of rum; fifty pipes of wine; one hundred and fifty hogsheads of sugar and molasses; ordinance and hospital furniture; medicines; pioneers', engineers' and carpenters' tools; and arms and ammunition in great variety and abundance; together with a quantity of regimental clothing, and four or five thousand pair of shoes and stockings. But the loss most severely felt, consisted in the destruction of nearly two thousand tents and marquees. These had been prepared for the campaign about to open, and for want of them the American army suffered much during the subsequent year.

Among those who fell in the final struggle, was an old man belonging to Litchfield named Paul Peck, long renowned throughout his native state, as the most expert hunter and the best marksman of his times. When news came that the British troops were in possession of Danbury, he immediately prepared for service a large and favorite gun, that carried balls an unusual distance. At the advanced age of seventy-five, he then joined the Litchfield volunteers, and marched against the enemy. It was eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the 28th when this company overtook the British rear-guard at Wilton, but it was actively engaged during the residue of

the day, under the command either of Lamb or of Huntington. When Colonel Lamb advanced up Compo Hill, the Litchfield volunteers were among the foremost of his followers, and fired upon the enemy from the cover afforded by the stone wall. Paul Peck finding a more favorable position somewhat nearer the hostile ranks, left his companions. Thenceforward he continued to fight on his own account independent of any superior. The extraordinary execution effected by his long firelock, upon the King's troops, at length aroused their attention, and they marked the spot where he lay. When soon afterward the volunteers were charged and driven from the wall, Archelaus Buel, his nearest comrade, called upon Peck to escape. But waiting, as was supposed, for another shot, the intrepid old man was surrounded by the enemy, and the exasperated soldiers refusing quarter, contended fiercely with each other who should give him the greatest number of mortal wounds.

Another of the most distinguished among the Litchfield volunteers, was the late Oliver Wolcott, then a youth of seventeen, who as a public servant was destined to occupy high positions in after life. While yet a young man, he was selected by General Washington to succeed Hamilton as secretary of the treasury; and some years later became Governor of Connecticut.

"In April, 1777," says his grandson George Gibbs, the editor of his papers, "his studies were broken in upon by a call to a less peaceful scene than the groves of Yale. He had gone to Litchfield on a visit to his mother, his father being absent attending Congress, when the news arrived that a large body of the British under Tryon had landed and marched to Danbury to destroy the Continental stores. Awakened at midnight by the summons to repair to the rendezvous of the militia, he armed himself, and his mother furnishing his knapsack, with provisions and a blanket, hastened his departure and dismissed him with the charge to 'conduct like a good soldier.'"

Wolcott took part in the skirmish at Wilton, and fought on the same day under Lamb, along with the Litchfield volunteers at Compo where his file leader was shot.

The Hawley family at Reading-on-the-ridge furnished at

this time an instance, not unusual in civil commotion, of the manner in which brethren sometimes separate in allegiance. Of four brothers two declared for the King and two for Congress. William, who captured General Agnew's horse, concealed his prize safely, as he supposed, in a cellar, but his brother Samuel discovered the steed, and delivered him on the same night to his former owner at Danbury. On the ensuing day these two brothers met each other, face to face, in the hostile ranks at Ridgefield.

While pushing on to come up with Tryon, both Wooster and Arnold accosted such persons as they encountered, by the wayside, urging them to turn out and join in the pursuit. A brief harangue was generally sufficient to set their patriotism in a blaze. They had just heard of the invasion. Appeals to the heart from leaders of such distinction, themselves pressing forward to the field, were irresistible. Leaving ploughs and workshops, these men of Connecticut ran to their arms, and some on foot and some on horseback, followed the two generals to the war.

Throughout the 27th and 28th days of April, great enthusiasm prevailed among the inhabitants of the country, and the male population, capable of bearing arms, everywhere abandoned their pursuits, and leaving their homes to female care, turned out in battle harness. This was the case not only in Connecticut, but also along the eastern parts of Courtland manor, in our county of Westchester. Timothy Delavan, a wealthy farmer of North Salem, and a zealous advocate for independence, grandfather of several gentlemen who bear the same surname, and who as merchants and public men are well and favorably known in New York City, sent his nine sons in arms against the enemy at Ridgefield. The patriarch himself accompanied his children on horseback, with provisions for their support. During the afternoon of the 27th and the morning of the following day the young volunteers, in pursuance of general orders, were travelling in small parties, in advance of the British, to join Arnold at Saugatuck. As they passed along, the women of the farm houses who did not or would not comprehend the commander's designs, fre-

quently came out of their dwelling and stopped the march of the young soldiers, like Spartan mothers, addressing them to this effect: "What is the matter? Why are you running away from the enemy? Are you frightened? Come! be brave boys and do something for the good cause. Turn back and strike a blow for Congress." Mortified and excited by the taunts and entreaties of the housewives, many of the volunteers wheeled about to skirmish with the enemy. Some lost their lives in consequence, and many others exposed themselves unnecessarily.

There can be but little doubt that upon this occasion, the British army narrowly escaped destruction. As the last day of the expedition drew to a close, both parties, but more particularly the invaders, had become excessively fatigued from the combined effects of marching, watching and insufficient food. When subsequently the American commander learned the condition in which his adversaries were, when they reached Compo, he declared that had he been in possession of such knowledge at the time, General Tryon would not have re-embarked in safety. So weary had the British soldiers become, that some of them it is said were unable to walk. When carried on board the transports, they fell upon the decks of the vessels, where for a considerable time they lay immovable and torpid.

Lieutenant Colonel Eleazer Oswald of New Haven, who served with great zeal during the last day of the incursion, had acted as Arnold's secretary throughout the Canada campaign. After the latter had been wounded and carried from the field, in the attempt upon Quebec, Oswald with great gallantry led the remains of the forlorn hope. He was afterwards transferred to the artillery service, and as Lamb's lieutenant was enlisting and drilling men for the regiment, when the news came that Tryon's forces had landed. Pursuant to Arnold's orders, he immediately mustered his recruits, consisting of two incomplete companies, and started with three guns, for the scene of action. As an artillerist, Oswald was an officer of uncommon ability. He acquired great distinction at the Battle of Monmouth. At the commencement

of the French revolutionary war, he was in England on business. Upon the invasion of France by the Allies, his enthusiasm for the republican cause and his love of military adventure overcame all other considerations, and crossing the Channel he hastened to Paris, and offered his services to the Convention. They were accepted with the most flattering civility. He thereupon at once proceeded to the frontiers and on arriving at General Dumouriez's headquarters, was appointed full colonel in the corps of artillery. At the celebrated battle of Jemappes, where Dumouriez attacked and defeated the Austrians who under Clairfayt were entrenched on the heights around the city of Mons, Oswald commanded a battery of four twenty-four pounders, and in the open field cannonaded three redoubts for the space of five successive hours. His contribution toward this victory gained him a high rank for skill and courage in the estimation of the French officers. Three weeks subsequently he distinguished himself in another action near the city of Siege. Upon this occasion the French vanguard commanded by Dumouriez in person, overtook and attacked the rear of the retreating Austrians under General Staray; at the village of Varoux. The engagement continued during the whole day. In the course of the evening the Imperialists crossed the Meuse and united themselves to their main body; and on the morning of the following day, the republicans entered Liege amidst the acclamations of the people. When Oswald first joined the Conventional forces, they were much embarrassed by the superiority of the Allied cavalry. In order to counteract this deficiency, he strongly urged the revolutionary officers, to bring into the field an unusual quantity of artillery. His advice is said to have found favor with the public authorities, and to have been a chief cause of their subsequent successes. In the year 1795, this abled and intrepid man died at New York of the yellow fever and was buried in St. Paul's church-yard.

Arnold's characteristics as a commander never appeared more striking than during the concluding operations of the expedition. Spurring from one corps to another, he addressed the volunteers and militia men. Appealing in a few

glowing words to their patriotism, he inspired them with his own intrepidity, and rendered them willing and even anxious to be led against a superior body of regular troops. Like Shakespeare's Mantagenet at Bosworth-Field his "soul was in arms." When ordinary solicitation failed, he condescended to entreaties, and sometimes reverted even to menaces and assault. Lockwood, a militia captain, from Stamford, on being ordered at Compo, to join one of the columns of attack; answered that his men refused to move. Arnold replied by first pointing a pistol at him and then firing it over the heads of his company, after which the recusants readily took their appropriate places. Arnold, whose heart had been bent upon the discomfiture of the British army, was much chagrined at the result of his last attack. After the action was over he spoke of the Continental troops and most of the volunteers in laudatory terms, but said of the militia that he hoped never again to see them in the field. When, however, the first feelings of disappointment had subsided, he admitted the injustice of his censure. He well knew that the best trained soldiers the world has seen, have sometimes suffered defeat from panic, and that it must needs be unreasonable to expect from the peaceful husbandman, who for the first time faces the enemy, that steadiness which the veteran soldier cannot always command. In his after-life, Arnold often alluded to the lessons he had learned from the Danbury invasion. Four years subsequently, when the sun of his glories had gone down in clouds and darkness, and lamentable defection had made his name a synonym for traitor, he commanded the British armament which entered Virginia and took possession of Richmond. He had not been long at this place, when for the purpose of preserving communication with the English fleet, he suddenly gave orders for a return to Westover, from whence he had marched. One of his officers earnestly solicited him to postpone his retreat, at least for a half day, in consequence of the recent hard service and fatigued state of the celebrated corps of light troops, called the Queen's Rangers. His answer was a prompt refusal couched in these impressive words:

"I feel sensibly how reasonable would be your request under ordinary circumstances, but prudence commands me upon the present occasion to retire instantly. If General Tryon had marched from Danbury two hours sooner he would have met with no opposition. Had he remained six hours later, his forces would never have regained their shipping."

During the advance upon Danbury, and the retreat that ensued, Governor Brown's corps in common with the other native volunteers, rendered the most important services to the enemy. With respect to the Provincial regiments composed of American royalists, it would not probably be exaggeration to say of them generally, that they were the most efficient troops that served the British crown, throughout the Revolutionary contest. To the ordinary qualifications of European soldiers, which they fully possessed, they superadded more skill in the use of fire arms, and far greater intelligence. After the termination of this incursion, Governor Tryon felt much indebted for its successful result, to the American portion of his followers. He returned them especially, public thanks, for their gallant and dexterous behaviour.

The promptness with which the people of Connecticut stood to their arms during Tryon's incursion of the year 1777 must in after ages stand out in bold relief, from the history of that well-ordered and wise Commonwealth, who in arming her children for the battle of life, has always clothed them with morality as with a coat of mail and placed in each right hand the sword of intelligence. No instance can probably be found in the annals of modern nations, where in the defence of their altars and firesides, the inhabitants of an invaded country, have rallied with more readiness and skill. To estimate properly the opposition offered to the King's troops upon this occasion many circumstances must be taken into the account. The resistance proceeded for the most part from inexperienced husbandmen, who in general were either badly or insufficiently armed. The inroad itself was of only three full days' duration. It happened at an early period of the revolutionary struggle, before the whole population had become inured, as

they afterwards were, to war. The invaders during the whole time and upon almost every point of attack, were superior in numbers. Among the various officers on the ground, no one, after the fall of Wooster, was universally recognized as entitled to the chief command. The soldiers of Connecticut were impelled by patriotic ardor directed by native sagacity. They had confidence it is true in Arnold and in general were willing to follow a leader of his renown. No considerations but these gave any unity to the operations of the various militia and independent volunteer companies of which the pursuing forces were almost wholly composed.

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that the antagonist forces were of the most select description, and that the expedition itself throughout its whole course, was conducted by the Royal commanders with singular ability. The best ark of a state's safety is always to be found in knowledge and love of country. This truth was never more fully illustrated than by the Danbury incursion. British historians admit that the retreat was hazardous. Officers of the invading army candidly acknowledged, both then and afterward, that fortune had come to their aid in the hour of peril, and the impression left upon the Royal commanders was such that no hostile force, at any subsequent period of the war, ever ventured into the interior of the State, three miles from navigation.

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